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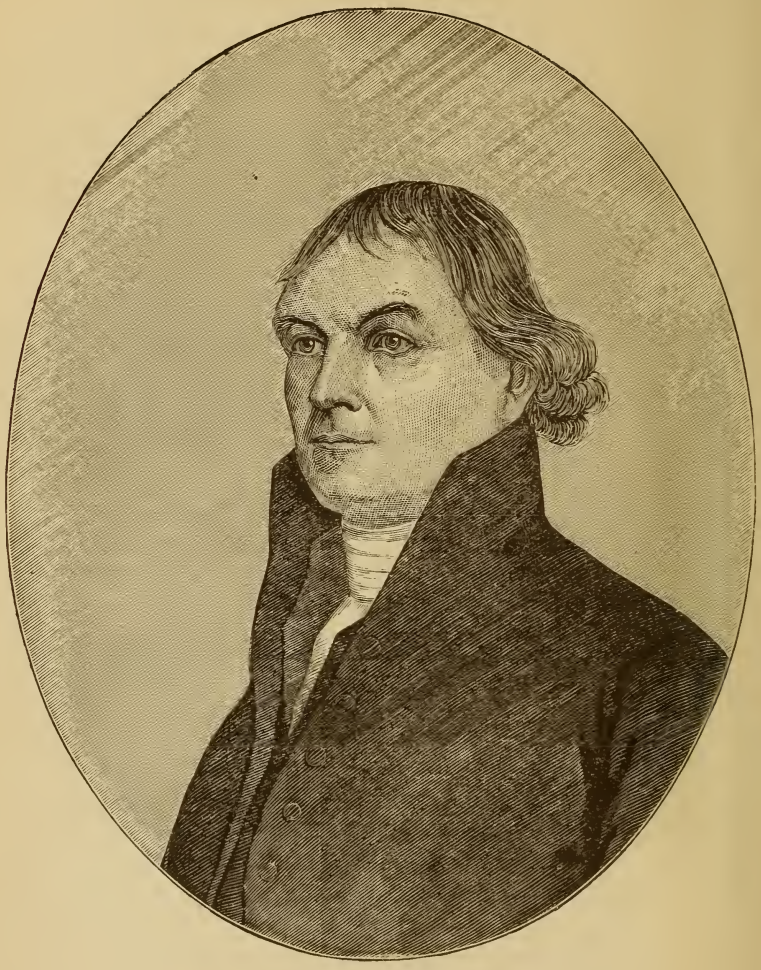

REV. WILLIAM McKENDREE,
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HISTORY

OF THE

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

IN THE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

By ABEL STEVENS, LL.D.

AUTHOR OF

"THE HISTORY OF THE RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY CALLED METHODISM," ETC.

VOLUME III

NEW YORK: EATON & MAINS
CINCINNATI: CURTS & JENNINGS

PREFACE.

THOMAS L. RUSHMORE, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR: I submit to you the third installment of my narrative of the History of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The name of your family appears honorably in its pages, connected with one of its most interesting episodes, the introduction of Methodism into Canada. Many of its subjects have been meditated under the summer shelter of your trees, and its labor has been relieved by neighborly attentions which will ever associate the memory of your family with my task.

In the two preceding volumes I have recorded the planting of the Church, and sufficiently defined its theological and ecclesiastical systems; in the present the story proceeds directly along its chronological line, suspended somewhat abruptly for the convenient size of the volume, but continued, with no further interruption, in the next, which is now passing through the press. Some important questions and topics, requiring more classified treatment, I have reserved for distinct chapters in the fourth volume, though they receive passing notice at their proper dates in the narrative.

Many difficulties, some insuperable ones, have beset my labors. While we have abundant and well-verified documents for particular sections of the Church, for others, not less important, we have hardly any. Of some early preachers we have more or less ample biographies; of others, and of not a few who were chieftains of the cause, we have but scattered notices, incapable of being wrought into satisfactory sketches. I have done the best I could, perhaps all that any pen can now or ever do, to present these cases in their proper historical positions. Many an evangelist, who labored as an apostle, or died as a martyr, in the early itinerancy, but whose name has been almost lost in the oblivion of our first traditions, reappears in my humble

record in heroic but unexaggerated proportions; yet of some of the noblest characters we can catch but glimpses, sufficient to show that they were men of genuine greatness, but insufficient to satisfy our interest for them. In the first two volumes I have given some space, however small, to almost every preacher recorded in the Conference Minutes of his day. In this many a once eminent name can hardly be more than mentioned; some, however, which may here seem to be ignored, will appear at more apposite points of the narrative in the fourth volume.

These volumes will have at least one peculiarity—the history of American Methodism will appear in them mostly, if not entirely, new; for our historical publications have not heretofore attempted any such minute record. Precisely for this reason will my attempt be liable to criticism. It is impossible that a first endeavor of the kind can be entirely correct. I expect, and shall gratefully receive, new names and facts, perhaps important corrections, from many, and especially from the remoter portions of our Church territory. However serious may be the deficiencies of these pages, I venture to hope that intelligent readers, who can appreciate the difficulties of my task, will acknowledge that I have not failed in the research and diligence which it merits. It may be doubted whether it has ever devolved upon an ecclesiastical historian to record a more curious, a more marvelous story than I have attempted in these volumes; more replete with heroic characters, romantic incidents, extraordinary labors and successes. A high foreign authority (the "London Quarterly Review") has said that "American Methodism is the most wonderful instance of Church development which the world's history has yet shown." I have felt deeply the importance of its lessons for the future of Methodism, if not indeed for the general Christian Church. It has been my study, therefore, to present it with all truthfulness, and especially to give, as fully as possible, its earliest events and characters, such as reveal its real genius and genetic conditions, and thereby afford its most valuable lessons. If the public will accord the work the generous forbearance with which I know you will accept it, I shall be more than satisfied.

Affectionately, ABEL STEVENS.

ORIENTA, MAMARONECK, N. Y.,

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HISTORY

OF THE

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

BOOK V.

FROM THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1792 TO THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1804.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1792—O'KELLY'S SCHISM.

Necessity of a General Conference — Coke returns to America — The General Conference — The "Council" ignored — Excited Debates — Religious Interest — Amendments of the Discipline — The Presiding Eldership established — General Conferences ordained — Supernumeraries — Preachers' Wives — Other Amendments — O'Kelly and the Appointing Power — Great Debates — O'Kelly and others Secede — Merits of the Question — Conclusion of the Conference — Its Character — O'Kelly's Schism — Disastrous Consequences — War of Pamphlets — Asbury — Loss of Members — Results — Asbury's Interview with O'Kelly — His continued Hostility — Was there a General Conference between 1784 and 1792? Note.

ANOTHER important event, in the history of American Methodism, was at hand: the second General Conference. The first, called the Christmas Conference, (in 1784,) had been an extraordinary convention of the ministry, held, at the instance of Wesley, for the episcopal organization of the Church. No provision was made for any subsequent similar assembly. The rapid multiplication of sectional or "annual conferences"

facilitated the local business of the denomination, but rendered legislation on its general interests difficult, if not impossible. If the early custom of carrying general measures from one conference to another, till all had acted upon them, still continued, it had now become exceedingly inconvenient; it delayed the enactment of such measures nearly a year; there could be no ready comparison of opinions, or answer of objections, between conferences remotely apart; and the last in the series for the year might, for want of such consultation, defeat the votes of all that had preceded it, thereby requiring the measure to be repeated in a revised form through another year. Asbury's favorite "Council" failed as a substitute; it was defective, as has been shown, by giving the bishops supreme control of its constituency, and endangering the uniformity, if not the unity, of the Church, for its enactments were to have effect only in such Annual Conferences as should approve them. Some other mode of general legislation was therefore necessary. The memorable assembly of 1784 presented the expedient example, and accordingly a General Conference was called for 1792.

Bishop Coke had left America, as we have seen, in May, 1791, on receiving the news of Wesley's death, and was absent about a year and a half. This was an anxious and busy period with him. The difficulties attending the settlement of the Wesleyan Connection, after the loss of its great founder, were exasperated by jealousy, if not maltreatment of the bishop, among the English preachers.[1] He bore patiently, however, his humiliating reception, and pursued with undiminished ardor his public labors. Besides preparing, with Henry Moore, a Life of Wesley, and beginning a Com-

[1] Drew's Life of Coke, p. 232.

mentary on the Holy Scriptures, in six quarto volumes, (a labor of fifteen years,[2]) he attempted to introduce Methodism into France. He went to Paris with an assistant preacher, de Quetteville, and commenced public worship. The project, however, was found to be premature, and was abandoned. He returned to London, and thence hastened over much of the United Kingdom, preaching and collecting funds for his West India Missions. Successful in this task, he embarked in September, 1792, for the General Conference in Baltimore, accompanied by a missionary for the West Indies. His voyage was long, sixty days, thirteen of them spent in beating about the British channel. He began to despair of reaching his destination before the adjournment of the conference, but relieved the tediousness of the delay by constantly writing at his Commentary. "From the time I rise till bedtime," he says, "except during meals, I have the cabin table to myself, and work at it incessantly. I never was accustomed to dream much till now; but I seem to be at my pleasing work even while I sleep. I have six canary birds over my head, which sing most delightfully, entertaining me while I am laboring for my Lord."[3] Neither Wesley nor Asbury exceeded this devoted man in ministerial labors or travels, and scarcely any man of his age equaled him in pecuniary sacrifices for religion; yet, on observing his birthday on the high seas, (October 9th,) he writes: "I am now forty-five. Let me take a view of my past life. What is the sum of all? What have I done? And what am I? I have done nothing;

[2] His friend, Samuel Drew, aided him in this and most of his other literary labors; but to what extent, Drew never would reveal. Drew's Coke, p., 361.

[3] Extracts of the Journals of the Rev. Dr. Coke's Five Visits to America, p. 159. London: 1793.

no, nothing; and I am a sinner! God be merciful to me!"

On the 20th of October, following an annual custom of Methodism, "I renewed," he says, "my covenant with God this morning in as solemn and happy a temper as ever I experienced, my first espousals to God not excepted." On the 28th he writes: "A pilot is just come on board, and in all probability I shall be in Baltimore in time. The Lord does all things well; glory and honor be ascribed to him for ever!" Two days later he landed at Newcastle, Del. He had "seventy miles to ride in the space of a day and a few hours, in order to be in time for the General Conference;" he flew over the distance, wearing out one chaise-horse and breaking down another. "About nine o'clock Wednesday night, October 31, I arrived," he continues, "at the house of my friend, Philip Rogers, of Baltimore, with just time enough to take some refreshment, and a little sleep, before the General Conference commenced. Mr. Asbury and the preachers who were at Mr. Rogers's were surprised to see me at that critical moment. They had almost given me up, but intended to spend ten days in debating matters of the smallest importance, in prayer, and in declaring their experiences, before they entered on the weightier business, if I did not sooner arrive."

The General Conference began on the 1st of November, 1792. We have no "official" record of its proceedings;[4] but Jesse Lee, who was present, has preserved an

[4] The Journals of the General Conferences were published by order of the session of 1852, and edited by Rev. Dr. M'Clintock, who says in his preface, "The Minutes of the General Conference for 1792 were never published, to my knowledge, nor can I find the original copy. Those of 1796 were published in a compendium form, which is now reprinted." Our official records of these sessions, then, begin in the latter year. Those of 1784 and 1792 seem to be irrecoverably lost; the

outline of its most important doings. He represents the gathering of preachers as numerous; "from all parts of the United States where we had any circuits formed."[5] They came with "the expectation that some thing of great importance would take place, in the connection," in consequence of the session; they supposed that "in all probability there would never be another conference of the kind;" but that, owing to the rapid extension of the ecclesiastical field, "the conference would adopt some permanent regulations which would prevent the preachers from coming together in a General Conference." If they anticipated any regular quadrennial session, it is probable that they supposed it would thereafter be a delegated body, for Lee himself had advocated this modification,[6] and is entitled to the credit of being the author of the change, which, though resisted for sixteen years, was at last forced upon the body in 1808 by irresistible necessity.

The "Council," at its last session, in 1790, had adjourned to meet in Baltimore, or at Cokesbury College, in December, 1792, probably supposing that it would be recognized and empowered by the General Conference. But Lee, who had stoutly opposed it from the beginning, reports that "the bishops and preachers in general showed a disposition to drop it and all things belonging thereto." Asbury even "requested that its name might not again be mentioned in the conference." "It was tacitly abolished; it was dead," says Lee's biographer, "and he was present at its burial." It had

substance of the former, however, was embodied in the Discipline of 1785, and has been given in my preceding volume. For an account of the chief proceedings of 1792 we are indebted to Lee's "History of the Methodists."

[5] Lee's History, p. 176.

[6] Dr. Lee's Life, etc., of Jesse Lee, p. 270.

threatened to disown him as a preacher, because of his opposition to it. "His triumph had come, and it was complete. He enjoyed it in silence."

In sketching the organization of the Church by the Conference of 1784, I have anticipated some of the amendments of the Discipline, adopted at the present session, and need not repeat them.

On the first day rules for the government of the body were enacted. A committee was appointed to prepare and report to it all its business; as, however, the debates in the committee had to be repeated in the full assembly, it was found not to expedite, but rather retard business; it was enlarged, but at last dismissed. The chief restrictive regulation adopted provided that two thirds of all the members voting could abolish an old law or make a new one, but that a majority might alter or amend any existing law.

The first day was spent in considering the rules of the house. On the second,[7] O'Kelly introduced a motion affecting radically the power of the episcopate, and indirectly reflecting on the administration of Asbury; it absorbed all attention for nearly a week, so that the revision of the Discipline, and the most needed legislation of the session, did not begin till Tuesday the 6th. The excited debates were relieved by extraordinary religious services on Sunday, when Coke preached "a delightful sermon" on Rom. viii, 16—the "Witness of the Spirit"—which was printed by order of the conference. O'Kelly, who was one of the most commanding men of the itinerancy, preached in the afternoon on Luke xvii, 5: "The apostles said unto the Lord, In-

[7] For the order of the proceedings of about half the session I am indebted to an extract from "a manuscript of William Colbert," a member, given in Peck's "Early Methodism," etc., p. 39.

crease our faith." "The power of the Lord attended the word," says a hearer.[8] At night Henry Willis, the the most endeared to Asbury of all the itinerants of that day, preached on Psalm xcv, 10, 11, probably with reference to the strifes of the period against the bishop, for Willis defended him and opposed O'Kelly in the conference debates. Meanwhile there was daily preaching in the city and vicinity, and a general "revival" kindled, for there were many of the preachers who cared more for the prosperity of the Churches than for the controversies of the conference.

On Tuesday of the second week began the revision of the Discipline. Regular General Conferences were ordained, and the Annual Conferences were distinguished, from these quadrennial assemblies, by the title of "District Conferences," as it was determined to hold one of them for each presiding elder's district,[9] their limits to be defined by the bishops, "yet so as not to include more than twelve, nor less than three circuits in each district." The bishops had also power to appoint the times of their sessions. The character of a "supernumerary preacher" was for the first time stated; he is "one who is so worn out in the itinerant service as to be rendered incapable of preaching constantly, but is willing to do any work in the ministry which the conference may direct and his strength enable him to perform." Provision was made for the election, ordination, and trial of bishops. The office of Presiding Elder took, for the first time, a definitive form, and the title

[8] Peck's "Early Methodism," etc., p. 39.

[9] The Annual Conferences are thus called throughout the Discipline of 1792, but never afterward. From 1820 to 1836 the title reappears in the Discipline as the name of certain Local Preachers' Conferences. (Emory's History of Discipline, p. 110. One of our most important historical standards.)

appears for the first time in the Discipline.[10] The Order of Elders was provided in the organization of the Church of 1784; as Wesley, however, had requested that as few candidates as were absolutely necessary for the administration of the sacraments, should be appointed, only twelve were then ordained.[11] With Wesley's approval the number was afterward increased. They traveled over given sections of the Church, administering the sacraments, and maintaining a general supervision of the circuits. Their appointment to their respective sections had hitherto been without limitation in respect to time. O'Kelly, for example, had traveled the same district in southern Virginia ever since his ordination in 1784, and had been stationed there several years before. It is supposed that disadvantages, resulting from his case, led to the present modifications of the office. The new law provided that the bishops should appoint the presiding elders, not allowing them a longer term than four years on any one district; that it should be the duty of the elder to travel through his appointed district; in the absence of a bishop, to take charge of all the elders, deacons, traveling and local preachers, and exhorters within it; to change, receive, or suspend preachers during the intervals of the conferences, and in the absence of the bishop; in the absence of the bishop to preside in the conference of his district; and to call together, at each quarterly meeting, all the traveling and local preachers, exhorters, stewards, and leaders of the circuit, to hear complaints, and to receive appeals; to oversee the spiritual and temporal business of the

[10] The title does not appear in the Annual Minutes, however, till 1797, though it had been used in 1789 in the scheme of the "Council" and in the Minutes.

[11] The Bishops' Notes to the Discipline of 1796.

societies; to take care that every part of the Discipline be enforced; to attend the bishop when present in his district, and to give him, when absent, all necessary information of its condition, by letter. He was to be supported by any surplus of the contributions for the ministry on the circuits of his charge, and, if there should be no surplus, he was to share equally with his corps of preachers. The office as thus developed has been of momentous importance in the progress of the Church. If the episcopate has been the right arm, the presiding eldership has been the left arm of its disciplinary administration; a virtual though subordinate episcopacy, without the right to ordain. By the present conference the presiding elder was virtually made a diocesan bishop: he had charge of a whole conference, for each district was a conference. The services of the office in the early history of the denomination, and its later importance in the new fields of the ministry, can hardly be exaggerated. Preachers' wives had been allowed pecuniary assistance from the Church; they were now made claimants upon its funds to an amount equal to that of their husbands', sixty-four dollars per annum. Besides the preacher's salary or allowance, his "traveling expenses" were to be paid by the circuit; these, in the language of the contemporary historian, were for "ferriage, horse shoeing, and provisions for himself and horse on the road when he necessarily rode a distance." The interdiction of fees for marriages was taken off; the preacher was now permitted to receive, but "not to charge" them. Should there, however, be a deficiency in the circuit contributions for the ministry, all such gifts were to be placed in the hands of the stewards, and be equally divided among the circuit preachers. They were required also, in order to receive any aid from

the conference funds, to report "all moneys, clothes, and other presents of any kind," a rule characteristic not only of the simplicity of the times, but also of the intimate brotherhood of the ministry; "intended," says the historian, "to keep all the preachers as nearly on an equal footing as possible in their money matters, that there might be no jealousies or envyings among us; but that we, like brethren of the same family, might all labor together in the gospel of Jesus Christ." They were not allowed to "receive a present" for baptism or the burial of the dead. A rule was adopted for the settlement of disputes between brethren "concerning the payment of debts;" it underwent various modifications, from time to time, till 1812, when it received the form it still bears in the Discipline. The order of public worship was prescribed, without an allusion to Wesley's abridged liturgy; and the use of fugue tunes was disapproved. Methodists removing from one Church to another were required to bear with them a certificate that "A. B., the bearer, has been an acceptable member in C.;" still an indispensable requirement throughout the Church. Provision was made for the trial of preachers for immorality, or improper conduct, and also for heresy. "The latter," says Lee, "was to prevent the spread of the erroneous doctrines which had been imbibed and propagated in public and in private by O'Kelly, who, previous to that time, had taken much pains to draw off some of our preachers into his way of thinking, and had so far succeeded in his endeavors as to get some of them confused and bewildered in their minds about the doctrine of the Trinity. At this conference we made the following rule, in addition to the former one, respecting the trial of private members: 'If a member of our Church shall

be clearly convicted of endeavoring to sow dissensions in any of our Societies, by inveighing against either our doctrine or discipline, such person so offending shall be first reproved by the senior preacher of his circuit; and if he afterward persist in such pernicious practices he shall be expelled the Society.'"

Such were the principal amendments of the Discipline made at this General Conference. In their preface to the next edition the bishops say: "We have made some little alterations in the present edition, yet such as affect not in any degree the essentials of our doctrines and discipline. We think ourselves obliged frequently to view and review the whole order of our Church, always aiming at perfection, standing on the shoulders of those who have lived before us, and taking advantage of our former selves."[12]

But the chief subject of its deliberations was the proposition of O'Kelly, to so abridge the episcopal prerogative that, "after the bishop appoints the preachers, at conference, to their several circuits, if any one thinks himself injured by the appointment he shall have liberty to appeal to the conference and state his objections; and if the conference approve his objections, the bishop shall appoint him to another circuit." O'Kelly doubtless had prepared the way, among the preachers, for the agitation of this radical innovation, and Asbury evidently anticipated it; for he writes, "I felt awful at the General Conference."[13] The motion was obviously

[12] In 1792 the Discipline of the Church was revised and somewhat altered. The sections were distributed into three chapters, of which the first, containing twenty-six sections, related to the ministry; the second, containing eight sections, to the membership; and the third, containing ten sections, embraced the temporal economy of the Church, the Doctrinal Tracts, and the Forms.—*Emory's History of the Discipline*, p. 84.

[13] Asbury's Journals, 1792.

a reflection on his administration, but he bore it with admirable magnanimity. He adds: "At my desire they appointed a moderator, and preparatory committee, to keep order and bring forward the business with regularity. We had heavy debates on the first, second, and third sections of our form of discipline. My power to station the preachers without an appeal was much debated, but finally carried by a very large majority. Perhaps a new bishop, new conference, and new laws would have better pleased some. I have been much grieved for others, and distressed with the burden I bear, and must hereafter bear. O my soul, enter into rest! Ah, who am I, that the burden of the work should lie on my heart, hands, and head?"

Having secured the organization of the body, with Coke for moderator, he retired anxious and sick, but his "soul breathing unto God, and exceedingly happy in his love." He addressed the following characteristic letter to the conference: "Let my absence give you no pain; Dr. Coke presides. I am happily excused from assisting to make laws by which myself am to be governed: I have only to obey and execute. I am happy in the consideration that I never stationed a preacher through enmity, or as a punishment. I have acted for the glory of God, the good of the people, and to promote the usefulness of the preachers. Are you sure that if you please yourselves the people will be as fully satisfied? They often say, 'Let us have such a preacher;' and sometimes, 'We will not have such a preacher, we will sooner pay him to stop at home.' Perhaps I must say, 'His appeal forced him upon you.' I am one, ye are many. I am as willing to serve you as ever. I want not to sit in any man's way. I scorn to solicit votes. I am a very trembling, poor creature to bear praise or dis

praise. Speak your minds freely; but remember, you are only making laws for the present time. It may be that, as in some other things, so in this, a future day may give you further light." "I am not fond of altercations," he writes in his journal at the time; "we cannot please everybody, and sometimes not ourselves. I am resigned."

The discussion, as we have seen, occupied nearly a week; it was the first of those great parliamentary debates which have given pre-eminence to the deliberative talent of the body. It was led chiefly by O'Kelly, Ivey, Hull, Garrettson, and Swift for the affirmative, and by Willis, Lee, Morrell, Everett, and Reed for the negative,[14] all chieftains of the itinerancy and eloquent preachers. The mere intimations respecting it, found in the writings of contemporary Methodists, show that it was an occasion of extraordinary interest. Lee says "the arguments, for and against, were weighty, and handled in a masterly manner. There never had been a subject before us that so fully called forth all the strength of the preachers." Coke, however anxious for the issue of the controversy, sat in the chair rapt in admiration of the talent it elicited. Lee records a brief outline of the proceedings. He says: "A large majority appeared at first to be in favor of the motion. But at last John Dickins moved to divide the question thus: 1. Shall the bishop appoint the preachers to the circuits? 2. Shall a preacher be allowed an appeal? After some debate the dividing of the question was carried. The first question being put, it was carried without a dissenting voice. But when we came to the second question, 'Shall a preacher be allowed an appeal?' there was a difficulty started, whether this was to be con-

[14] Peck's Early Methodism, p. 39.

sidered a new rule, or only an amendment of an old one. If it was a new rule, it would take two thirds of the votes to carry it. After a considerable debate it was agreed by vote that it was only an amendment of an old rule. Of course after all these lengthy debates we were just where we began, and had to take up the question as it was proposed at first. One rule for our debates was, 'That each person if he choose shall have liberty to speak three times on each motion.' By dividing the question, and then coming back to where we were at first, we were kept on the subject, called the *Appeal*, for two or three days. On Monday we began the debate afresh, and continued it through the day; and at night we went to Otterbein's church, and again continued it till near bedtime, when the vote was taken, and the motion was lost by a large majority."

Thomas Ware was a member of the conference, and has left us a further glimpse of the great discussion. He says: "It was allowed on all hands that no sacrifice could be too great to accomplish the object we had in view, namely, the salvation of souls; but the question was, whether the means were the most perfectly adapted to the accomplishment of that object; whether for this purpose so large a body of men should hold themselves ready to go wherever the general superintendent should deem it best in his judgment to send them. The number of traveling preachers was at this time two hundred and sixty six. Had O'Kelly's proposition been differently managed it might possibly have been carried. For myself, at first I did not see anything very objectionable in it. But when it came to be debated, I very much disliked the spirit of those who advocated it, and wondered at the severity in which the movers, and

others who spoke in favor of it, indulged in the course of their remarks. Some of them said that it was a shame for a man to *accept* of such a lordship, much more to *claim* it; and that they who would submit to this absolute dominion must forfeit all claims to freedom, and ought to have their ears bored through with an awl, and to be fastened to their master's door and become slaves for life. One said that to be denied such an appeal was an insult to his understanding, and a species of tyranny to which others might submit if they chose, but for his part he must be excused for saying he could not. The advocates of the opposite side were more dispassionate and argumentative. They urged that Wesley, the father of the Methodist family, had devised the plan, and deemed it essential for the preservation of the itinerancy. They said that, according to the showing of O'Kelly, Wesley, if he were alive, ought to blush, for he claimed the right to station the preachers to the day of his death. The appeal, it was argued, was rendered impracticable on account of the many serious difficulties with which it was encumbered. Should one preacher appeal, and the conference say his appointment should be altered, the bishop must remove some other one to make him room; in which case the other might complain and appeal in his turn; and then again the first might appeal from the new appointment, or others whose appointments these successive alterations might interrupt. Hearing all that was said on both sides, I was finally convinced that the motion for such an appeal ought not to carry."

The next morning, after the decision of the question, the conference was startled by a letter from O'Kelly and "a few other preachers," declaring that they could no longer retain their seats in the body, "because the

appeal was not allowed." A committee of preachers was immediately appointed to wait upon them and persuade them to resume their seats. Garrettson, who had taken sides with them in the controversy, was on this committee. He says: "O'Kelly's distress was so great on account of the late decision, that he informed us by letter that he no longer considered himself one of us. This gave great grief to the whole conference. Two persons were appointed with me as a committee to treat with him. Many tears were shed, but we were not able to reconcile him to the decision of the conference. His wound was deep, and apparently incurable."

Before the week closed O'Kelly had an interview with Coke, but availed himself of it to criminate the doctor and the conference. Finally, says Lee in his naive style: "He, and the preachers that were particularly influenced by him, set off for Virginia, taking their saddle-bags, great coats, and other bundles on their shoulders or arms, walking on foot to the place where they left their horses, which was about twelve miles from town. I stood and looked after them as they went off, and observed to one of the preachers that I was sorry to see the old man go off in that way, for I was persuaded he would not be quiet long, but would try to be head of some party. The preacher then informed me that O'Kelly denied the doctrine of the Trinity, and preached against it, by saying that the Father Son, and Holy Ghost were characters, and not persons; and that these characters all belonged to Jesus Christ. That Jesus Christ was the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The preacher further said, that it was his intention to have had O'Kelly tried at that conference for the false doctrines which he had been preaching; and he believed that his leaving the conference was

more out of fear of being brought to trial than on account of the appeal. But so it was, James O'Kelly never more united with the Methodists."

Asbury had triumphed by his wise silence; his supporters in the debate had prevailed not so much by the abstract merits of their side of the question, as by the practical good sense, and loyalty to the Church, with which they drew their arguments from its peculiar circumstances and necessities. Abstractly considered, O'Kelly's proposition seemed not unreasonable, for it must be remembered that the bishop had absolute power over the distribution of all the preachers, from Boston to Savannah, there having been yet no "cabinet" of presiding elders to assist in his appointments. We are not surprised, therefore, that, on the first appearance of the question, such men as Garrettson, Ware, Hull, Ivey, and Reed sustained O'Kelly. It should not be forgotten, also, that at this very time had commenced those debates in the British Conference, occasioned by the recent death of Wesley, which resulted in the reorganization of Wesleyan Methodism, with precisely the "appeal," advocated by O'Kelly, recognized as a constitutional right of every itinerant preacher; a right still maintained by Wesleyan Methodism throughout the world. But the Wesleyan ministry deemed no such right expedient while Wesley remained at their head; and Asbury was now, to American, what Wesley had been to British Methodism. The ecclesiastical system of the American Church had hitherto been, by common consent, a sort of military *regime;* only as such could it meet the peculiar wants of its vast, its new and ever-opening field. Its ministry was a volunteer corps; no one was constrained to remain in the ranks; they wisely chose to have an effective

commandant, invested with decisive authority, and willing, as well as able, to throw them to any point of the great field, into any deadly breach; they demanded of him only that the victory be won. If they had an abstract right to O'Kelly's "appeal," they believed that they had also the right to waive that right, for the general good. Their vote, therefore, was not an act of servility; it was heroism. And they knew, moreover, that the legislative power of the Church was in their own hands; that they could qualify the episcopal prerogative whenever they should see it expedient to do so; their choice not to do so now was voluntary and commendable.

After the withdrawal of O'Kelly peace and the old brotherly spirit again pervaded the conference. Asbury, by request of his brethren, preached to them on the appropriate text of 1 Peter iii, 8: "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous." He had preached his text during the session, by his example, and could now effectually preach it from the pulpit. A solemn ordination of James Thomas and William Colbert, two itinerant pioneers, took place the day after O'Kelly's secession. On Thursday, the fifteenth and last day, the business being ended, Coke preached before the conference on James i, 27, ("Pure religion," etc.) It was the befitting climax of the occasion; a profound feeling pervaded the assembly, "a solemn awe rested upon them." "The meeting was continued till about midnight," he says, "and twelve persons, we have reason to believe, were then added into the family of God. This was a glorious conclusion; a gracious seal from Heaven to our proceedings."[15]

He left the city with a higher estimate of the Amer-

[15] Journals, p. 264.

ican itinerants than he had ever formed before. "We continued our conference," he says, "for fifteen days. I had always entertained very high ideas of the piety and zeal of the American preachers, and of the considerable abilities of many; but I had no expectation, I confess, that the debates would be carried on in so very masterly a manner; so that on every question of importance the subject seemed to be considered in every possible light. Throughout the whole of the debates they considered themselves as the servants of the people, and therefore never lost sight of them on any question. Indeed, the single eye, and the spirit of humility, which were manifested by the preachers throughout the whole of the conference, were extremely pleasing, and afforded a comfortable prospect of the increase of the work of God throughout the continent."

Asbury resumed his labors and travels, recording that "the conference ended in peace; my mind was kept in peace, and my soul enjoyed rest in the Stronghold." Lee says that "notwithstanding we had some close debates, and some distressing hours, and, withal, some of our preachers were so offended as to leave the conference before the business was half finished, yet it was a comfortable time to most of us, and we were highly favored of the Lord with his presence and love in the last of our sitting. Our hearts were closely united together, and we parted in great union, love, and fellowship. Some of the preachers who came to conference were quite dissatisfied; but at the close of the meeting they were perfectly reconciled, and returned to their circuits fully determined to spend and be spent in the work of the ministry, and in the fellowship of the Church."

The generous heart of Garrettson was deeply affected

by the final spectacle of peace and brotherly concord. At the close of the session he wrote: "O what a wonder to see so large a body of preachers gathered from all parts of the country, and like little children sitting at each others' feet, united as the heart of one man, and all engaged in one common cause, namely, to demolish the kingdom of Satan, and to build up that of the Redeemer! I retired to my room, not indeed alone, for I trust my blessed Saviour was with me. O my God, let me rather die than cease to love thee." [16] Ware has left a favorable testimony for the session, though he says, probably in allusion to some personal treatment in the debates, that "some of the painful sensations I felt, during it, have caused me at times to wish I could forget there had been such a meeting;" but he adds, "we went through our business amicably; and there was a gracious work of revival in the congregations throughout the city. As to the conference, I was pleased with the spirit in which its business was transacted." [17]

Some serious consequences were, however, to follow these transactions. Lee's prediction that O'Kelly would not remain quiet, but would become the head of a party, was to be verified. He had long lived on the border between Virginia and North Carolina, as circuit preacher and presiding elder. His influence swayed the ministry and people, on both sides, all along that line. He had been a devout and zealous man; an eloquent preacher; a strenuous Methodist; a tireless laborer; an heroic opposer of slavery, [18] enforcing the antislavery law of the

[16] Bangs's Garrettson, p. 207. [17] Life, etc., p. 222.

[18] He not only preached against slavery, but published "An Essay on Negro Slavery," Philadelphia, 1789, the first American Methodist publication of the kind that I can recall; a pamphlet by Garrettson was the second.

Church. Yet his restless temper had led him into conflict with Asbury some time before the conference of 1792.[19]

He was now a veteran, broken with age, an Irishman of fiery temperament, and, as usual with such temperaments, his conscience was weak, easily swayed by his prejudices; weak to yield to them, though strong to defend them. He returned to Virginia prepared to upturn the foundations he had helped to lay. Asbury hastened thither also, and held a conference in Manchester. Already O'Kelly had begun his pernicious work; some of the most devoted people and preachers had been disaffected; and, in this day, we are startled to read that William M'Kendree, afterward one of the saintliest bishops of the Church, and Rice Haggard, sent to Asbury "their resignations in writing." The conference knew the infirmities of O'Kelly, and was inclined to forbearance; it resolved to permit the disaffected itinerants still to preach in its pulpits. It compassionated the veteran leader, and, says Asbury, "as he is almost worn out, the conference acceded to my proposal of giving him forty pounds per annum, as when he traveled in the connection, provided he would be peaceable and forbear to excite divisions." He accepted the offer, used the money for some time, but at last relinquished his claim, and devoted himself, with his characteristic zeal, to the promotion of schism. The refusal of the conference to qualify the episcopal power to appoint the preachers was his ostensible argument. It was plausible, but not logical, in the peculiar circumstances of the Church. It was quite irrelevant to him-

[19] Asbury's Journals, ii, p. 69. He had professed perfect reconciliation, however, with the bishop a year before the conference. (See p. 134.)

self personally. "For himself," writes Asbury, "the conference well knew he could not complain of the regulation. He had been located to the south district of Virginia for about ten successive years; and upon his plan might have located himself, and any preacher, or set of preachers, to the district, whether the people wished to have them or not."

It was a period of general excitement in Virginia by the political contests of the Republicans and Federalists, the former being the dominant party. O'Kelly adroitly availed himself of these party agitations, and formed his associates into a Church with the title of "Republican Methodists." Their organization gave them a temporary power, and disastrous results followed. They held "conference after conference," devising a sytem of Church government; but insubordination reigned among them. In 1793 they had a number of societies, but, says the historian of the times,[20] they were "formed on a leveling plan." "All were to be on an equal footing. One preacher was not to be above another, nor higher in office or in power than another. No superiority or subordination was to be known among them. They promised to the lay members of the Church greater liberties than they had formerly enjoyed among us, and prevailed with a good many of our people to leave us and join them. In some places they took from us whole societies together, and in many places they drew off a part. Others they threw into confusion; and in some places they scattered the flock and separated the people one from the other, without securing them to their own party. They took a few meeting-houses from us, and preached in them themselves; and some houses we left and would not

[20] Lee, p. 503.

preach in them, in order to avoid contentions. The disaffected party then began to pour out a flood of abuse against us, to ridicule us, and to say all manner of evil against us; and withal, they took unjustifiable steps in order to set our members against the preachers. The divisive spirit prevailed more in the south parts of Virginia than in any other place. There were some of our societies in the northeast part of North Carolina who felt the painful effects of the division, and were considerably scattered and greatly injured. Several of our local preachers and many of our private members were drawn off from us, and turned against us. The societies were brought into such troubles and difficulties that they knew not what to do. Many that were drawn off from us would not join with the other party. Brother was turned against brother, and one Christian friend against another. The main contention was about the government of the Church; who should govern it, or in what manner it ought to be governed. In this mist of darkness and confusion, many religious people, who had been warm advocates for the life and power of religion, began to contend about Church government, and neglect the duties of religion, till they were turned back to the world, and gave up religion altogether. It was enough to make the saints of God weep between the porch and the altar, and that both day and night, to see how 'the Lord's flock was carried away captive' by that division. Those preachers who turned aside from the truth did abundance of mischief among the people that were not religious, many of whom became so deeply prejudiced against religion and religious professors, that they would hardly attend on preaching at all. It might well be said, 'Without were fightings, and within were fears.'"

In 1793 they held a conference in Mannakin Town, Va., the scene of a former dissentient Methodist assembly, in the famous "sacramental controversy." They there framed a constitution, and O'Kelly, as their leader, ordained their preachers. In 1801 they discarded their laws and title and assumed the name of "The Christian Church," renouncing all rules of Church government but the New Testament, as interpreted by every man for himself. O'Kelly published a pamphlet attacking Asbury and the Methodist Episcopal Church.[21] Asbury collected documents for a reply, and presented them to the conference, which appointed one of its ablest members, Nicholas Snethen, to prepare them for publication. He issued "A Reply to an Apology," etc., to which O'Kelly responded in "A Vindication of an Apology." Snethen rejoined in "An Answer to James O'Kelly's Vindication of his Apology." Asbury's administration appears unimpeachable in Snethen's pages. In referring to his accusers the bishop says: "I bid such adieu, and appeal to the bar of God. I have no time to contend, having better work to do. If we have lost some children, God will give us more. Ah! this is the mercy, the justice of some, who, under God, owe their all to me and my *tyrants*, so called. The Lord judge between them and me."

The war of pamphlets ended, though Lee also prepared, in part, a manuscript reply to O'Kelly;[22] but the internecine war went on disastrously for some years. It occasioned "a great falling away from the Church." "In the years of its greatest influence, 1793–4–5, there was a clear loss in the membership of 7,352. But,

[21] "The author's Apology for Protesting against the Methodist Episcopal Church Government."—*Lee's Life of Lee*, p. 276. Dr. Lee gives a full account of the schism.

[22] Dr. Lee inserts it at p. 278.

although this loss was so great, there is no sufficient reason to believe 'The Republican Methodists,' as they were then called, had met with corresponding success. It has been the aim of some writers to show that there were numerous accessions to Methodism during this period, and that the loss of the Church was so much greater in proportion to the amount of these accessions; and that therefore the gain of O'Kelly was proportionally great. But this argument is unsupported by any facts we have been able to discover." [23]

It was impossible, however, that a schism so badly managed could long succeed. It broke into parties; several of its preachers fell away from it, and formed a new "plan of their own in Charlotte County, Va.;" many individual members and preachers, tired of the conflict, sought peace again in the parent Church; and Lee, writing in 1809, says: "They have been divided and subdivided, till at present it is hard to find two of them that are of one opinion. There are now but few of them in that part of Virginia where they were formerly the most numerous; and in most places they are declining."

Ten years after O'Kelly's revolt Asbury met him again in Winchester, Va. The bishop notes in his Journal, August 20, 1802, that "Mr. O'Kelly having been taken ill in town, I sent two of our brethren, Reed and Walls, to see him, by whom I signified to him that if he wished to see me I would wait on him: he desired a visit, which I made him on Monday, August 23. We met in peace, asked of each other's welfare, talked of persons and things indifferently, prayed and parted in peace. Not a word was said of the troubles of the former times. Perhaps this is the

[23] Lee's Life of Lee.

last interview we shall have upon earth." Bangs[24] supposes this interview was "near the close of O'Kelly's life," and expresses the hope that he died reconciled and "forgiven." Asbury's Journals, however, show that for many years later the energetic seceder still fought his hopeless battle. In 1805, the bishop, passing through Virginia, writes: "Mr. O'Kelly has come down with great zeal, and preaches three hours at a time upon government, monarchy, and episcopacy; occasionally varying the subject by abuse of the Methodists, calling them aristocrats and Tories; a people who, if they had the power, would force the government at the sword's point. Poor man!"

He survived till the 16th of October, 1826, when he died in his ninety-second year, retaining "to the latest period of his life unabated confidence in the purity and power of his system. In age and feebleness his hope in the work of his hands did not desert him. He went down to the grave, according to one of his followers, satisfied with the past, and peaceful and trustful with respect to the future."[25]

Singularly devoted, romantically chivalric as were these primitive itinerants, still they were but men. Their human infirmities were oftener revealed in their personal or private relations, than in their public connections with the great cause for which they labored, and therefore come but seldom within the purview of the historian. It seems indeed providential that, uneducated, enthusiastic, not to say superstitious, as not a few of them were, their individual weaknesses and

[24] Hist. M. E. Church, vol. i, p. 355.

[25] Lee's Life of Lee, p. 287, and also an obituary by Rev. John P. Lemay, attached to an edition of the Apology, published in Hillsborough, N. C., in 1829.

eccentricities so rarely touched their public work. The extraordinary *regime* of their ministerial system doubtless held them in check, and exhausted their superabundant energy in systematized and beneficent labors. The first and purest of men fell in Paradise; David fell at the head of God's elect people; Judas and Peter in the apostolic band. Some of these good men also fell. We have had to record examples of their downfall into fanatic insanity, schism, intemperance, and, in one instance, even into murder. Such cases were indeed surprisingly few, and quite exceptional to their general fidelity and sanctity; but to omit them in our pages would be to write romance, not history, and to suppress the important lesson, taught not only in Holy Scripture, but in all ecclesiastical history, that "all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world have come. Wherefore let him that standeth take heed lest he fall."

NOTE.—It has already been intimated (see vol. ii, p. 498, *Note*) that the numbering of this General Conference as "the second," has been questioned. Was the session of 1792 the first held after the Christmas Conference of 1784? Was not the Conference of 1787 (held in Baltimore) a General Conference, and the next held there, in 1788, an adjourned session of the same body? Such is the question which many readers may recall, as stoutly debated in the Christian Advocate, New York, in January and February, 1859, by Rev. Mr. De Hass and Rev. Dr. Coggeshall, respectively affirmative and negative in the dispute. The debate was without a satisfactory issue. It is singular how plausible the argument for the affirmative appears, and yet how decisive that of the negative really is. I can give here but a summary of the evidence, *pro* and *con*, not confining myself, however, to the two able disputants named, but presenting additional data on both sides.

1. An important fact, in favor of 1787, is a letter of Wesley requesting Coke to hold a General Conference at that time. The letter is dated September 6th, 1786, and says, "I desire that you would appoint a General Conference of all our preachers in the United States, to meet at Baltimore on May 1st, 1787, and that Mr. Richard Whatcoat may be

appointed superintendent with Mr. Francis Asbury." (See Lee's Life, etc., of Jesse Lee, p. 196, Note.) This is certainly a plausible initiative for the affirmative. Moreover,

2. Coke did, by correspondence, (from the West Indies, I suppose,) invite the preachers to such a meeting.

3. The session of the Baltimore Conference, which had in 1786 been appointed for Abingdon, Maryland, on the 24th of July, 1787, was actually changed, and the body did, in fact, meet in Baltimore on the 1st of May, the day proposed by Wesley. (Lee's History, p. 124.)

4. There was much important business done at this session which properly belongs to a General Conference, according to all our modern ideas of the relations of General and Annual Conferences.

These are certainly strong proofs; they would seem almost, if not quite, conclusive of the question, and they show how liable we are, in the obscurity or ambiguity of our early Church documents, to fall into mistakes respecting some most important events. But let us look at the other side of the question.

1. Taking together the first three of these arguments, it may be replied that the facts of Wesley's requesting a General Conference, and of Coke's correspondence calling it, and changing the date of the Baltimore Annual Conference for the purpose, are undenied and undeniable. But it must be further replied, that though Coke did these things, presuming on the authority of his episcopal office, and by the sanction of Wesley, yet Asbury and the preachers generally dissented from his proceedings. Coke, on reaching the country in March, 1787, to attend the Conference, says (Coke's "Journals," 1793) that he was "very coolly" received by Asbury; and when they arrived at the Conference he was rebuked severely by the preachers for his change of the time of the session, his correspondence, etc. He had to give, over his sign manual, a pledge to do so no more; and Wesley's name was omitted from the Minutes, and the old recognition of his authority in the American Church was erased. Evidently the preachers dissented from Wesley's wish and Coke's measures.

2. The session of 1787 did not do the business for which Wesley had proposed a General Conference. Richard Whatcoat was not elected a bishop, nor was Freeborn Garrettson, though Wesley requested both appointments. Bangs (Life of Garrettson) says, that the suggestion of the latter by Wesley was "unanimously sanctioned" by his brethren, but he shows that there was no election. Lee's account of Garrettson's case is quite inaccurate, (according to Garrettson's own statements;) but Lee himself shows that there was no election nor ballot on either case. (History of the Methodists, p. 126.)

3. That many of the measures of the sessions of 1787-88 were of a general character, appropriate only to the general action of the ministry, cannot be denied, but this fact can be easily explained. The first General Conference (of 1784) assembled for the organization of the Church, and having accomplished its business, adjourned without pro-

viding for any subsequent session. General as well as local business went on as before. Measures of a general character were submitted to the successive Annual Conferences, and, at the final session of the year, were considered to be determined by the majority of votes in all; the Minutes of all appeared still, in print, as the records of but one conference; and their enactments were from time to time inserted in the Discipline without reference to where or how they were enacted. Now it so happened that the Baltimore session for 1787 was the last session for that year, (Lee's Hist., p. 124,) and therefore its reported doings were given as the results of all the sessions of the year; that is to say, not of a General Conference, but of the Conferences generally. I am also of the opinion, from scattered allusions in contemporary books, that not a few important measures, applying to the whole Church, were decided sometimes by one or two of the principal conferences, (like that of Baltimore, Philadelphia, or New York,) without reference to the remoter sessions. In fact the Church was yet in its forming process, and, like an army on the march or in the field, was not very fastidious about questions of law. If the Baltimore sessions of 1787 and 1788 should be considered General Conferences, because of their important or general enactments, so then should that of Charleston, South Carolina, of 1789 (then on the southern frontier of the Church) for its doings about the Book Concern, "the College," the famous "Council," Sunday-schools, etc., and also that of 1785, which suspended the antislavery law of the Church.

4. Jesse Lee, the contemporary historian of the denomination, was at the sessions of 1787 and 1788, and was stationed in Baltimore in the interval of these sessions, and yet he nowhere speaks of them as General Conferences, but numbers them and reports them among the other annual sessions. This was an unpardonable oversight in the first historian of the Church, if they were General, not Annual Conferences.[2]

5. But Lee, on the other hand, distinctly names the session of 1792 as "the first regular General Conference." If it be replied, that he meant, by the "first *regular*" session, only that it was the first of the series which, from 1792, met *regularly* every four years, but that the session in question was an *irregular* one, the rejoinder might properly be that there was no reason for any such discrimination, for the session in question (especially as adjourned to 1788) was held at the same distance of time before 1792 as the session of 1796 was after it. Other contemporary writers uniformly speak of the session of 1792 as "the first General Conference." [3]

[2] The phrase "General Conference" was, nevertheless, sometimes vaguely applied to Annual Conferences, in the early days of the Church, to distinguish them from Quarterly Conferences.

[3] William Burke, a leader of Western Methodism at this time, says: "The first General Conference in the United States met early in the fall of this year." Autobiography in Finley's "Sketches of Western Methodism," p. 33. The session of 1784 was usually called the "Christmas Conference," and as it was a convention for a

6. "Straws show which way the wind blows," says the familiar maxim; and sometimes, when the air is too still for any more conspicuous indicator to show its course, a feather, by its very lightness, can decide the question. There is a brief clause in Asbury's Journals which I think has a similar significance in the present case. We have seen that when Coke arrived in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1787, from the West Indies, on his way to the supposed General Conference, he was "very coolly" received by Asbury. Now it so happened that when James O'Kelly withdrew from the Church, five years later, in his pamphlet against Asbury he accused the bishop of all sorts of maladministration, etc., and among other charges said that he treated Coke at his arrival in Charleston with excessive "sharpness." About fourteen years after the alleged General Conference, Asbury, in noticing this pamphlet, says, "There was no sharpness at all upon my side with Dr. Coke, at Charleston, respecting the *proposed* General Conference, (*which was afterward held* in 1792.) I was fully convinced that nothing *else* would finish the unhappy business with O'Kelly, and that did finish it." [4]

Evidently, then, Coke's "*proposed* General Conference" was not held in 1787 or 1788, but "afterward, in 1792." The session of 1792 was therefore not only "the first regular," but also the second General Conference; there having been none before it since the first or Christmas session of 1784.

special purpose, it was not commonly called a General Conference, though it really was such, and is so named by early writers. See Lee's account of it in his "History."

[4] Journals, iii, 8. The italics are my own, except the word "else."

CHAPTER II.

METHODISM IN THE SOUTH, FROM THE SECOND TO THE THIRD GENERAL CONFERENCES, 1792—1796.

Coke—His Proposition to Bishop White for the Union of the Methodist Episcopal and Protestant Episcopal Churches—Cokesbury College—Coke in Philadelphia—At New York—Perilous Accident—Asbury in the South—Among the O'Kellyites—His great Labors and Sufferings—At Rembert Hall—Hammett's Schism in Charleston, S. C.—Asbury in Georgia—At the Ruins of Whitefield's Orphan House—Among the Western Mountains—At General Russell's—Death of the General—Asbury at Baltimore—Scenes and Labors in the South—Death of Judge White—Further Travels and Labors.

Coke and Asbury parted after the General Conference of 1792; the former to the north, the latter to the south. The character and results of the session had evidently relieved Coke's mind of much anxiety respecting the stability of the Church. Its treatment of himself and Wesley, in 1787, and, especially, its repudiation of Wesley's authority and name, had alarmed both of them with apprehension of further disturbances. Wesley, as we have seen, wished Asbury to renounce his office, and the Church itself, rather than seem to sanction this procedure. As early as April, 1791, a year and a half before the General Conference, and but five days before the news of the death of Wesley reached Coke, the latter had opened a correspondence with Bishop White, of Philadelphia, proposing a union of the Methodist Episcopal and Protestant Episcopal Churches, but on terms which in nowise compromised the honor or rights of the former. He was with Asbury at the time,

in Virginia, yet seems not to have consulted him on the subject, nor any other Methodist authority in Europe or America; but Asbury had discerned his discontent with the condition of American Methodism.[1] His proposition was rash and imprudent, characteristic of the man, who, ever catholic, confident, and full of hasty energy, was, nevertheless, one of the most admirable ecclesiastical personages of his day. It resulted in no harm; it was unknown to the public till disclosed by the Protestant Episcopal party in 1804; and, in 1808, came under the consideration of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, when Coke made to his brethren an explanation, equally characteristic by its candor and good temper. We shall have occasion to review the facts of the case hereafter.

He now left the conference, confident and joyful in the prospects of the denomination.[2] He paused at Abingdon, Md., where he spent three days in examining the students of Cokesbury College. "We have more than seventy," he writes. "Dr. Hall, the president, and the three tutors, do honor to the institution; many from the southern states are sending their young men here to finish their education. The fear of God seems to pervade the college." He spent eight days with "the loving people" of Philadelphia, where there were three hundred Methodists, "in general solid and established in the grace of God." He prepared there a new edition of the Discipline, comprising all the regulations made at the late General Conference. On the 30th of November he reached New York, where he spent

[1] Asbury's Journals, April 25, 1791.

[2] Etheridge (Life of Coke, p. 242) appears to suppose that the controversy at the conference of 1792, and the conduct of O'Kelly, alarmed Coke, and led to his correspondence with White; but, as the dates in the text show, the latter began before the former.

twelve days, preparing for the press his general conference sermon on "The Witness of the Spirit," and preaching some twenty sermons to thronged assemblies. There were now six hundred Methodists in the city; most of these who had struggled down to the war had been dispersed through the country; but though nearly new, the society had "incomparably more of genuine religion" than at any former period. By the middle of December he was afloat again for the West India Missions, but with "a deliverance," he writes, "never to be forgotten. I went to the wharves to look out for a convenient vessel to carry me to the West Indies, and in ascending the side of the brig my foot slipped. I alighted on something at the edge of the water, which supported me; and with the assistance of those who were near, was raised on board. But when I looked back on the situation in which I had been a few moments before, it was most awful. A pole had been tied to the side of the brig to preserve it from being damaged by striking against the wharf. This pole received me in my fall, or otherwise in a second or two I must unavoidably have been crushed between the brig and the wharf. Six times I have been in the very jaws of death, upon or near the water, and yet am still preserved a monument of mercy in every respect!"

Asbury, as we have seen, struck forthwith to the south, to anticipate any schismatic measures of O'Kelly and his associates. We have already followed him in some of his movements among them; he held conferences, love-feasts, class and band meetings, preaching once or twice and riding forty or fifty miles almost daily. He excelled his humblest preachers in the humblest pastoral labors, and this was not his policy for a temporary exigency, like the present, but the habit of his long

ministerial life. "Traveling," he says, "in such haste I could not be as much in mental prayer as I desired, although I enjoyed many moments of sweet converse with God." At Alexandria he met the preachers in conference, and preached in "our small, neatly finished house." "The mischief has begun," he says, on arriving in Caroline county. He met the preachers, in band, at Manchester, where they had assembled for a conference. He "found their fears were greatly removed, and all things went on well" among the little loyal group, though the resignations of M'Kendree and Haggardy were sent in. "After all Satan's spite," he adds, "I think our sifting and shaking will be for good." Jesse Lee was with him, aiding in the pacification of the Churches. Asbury flew to all disturbed parts of the field in Virginia, and was successful in many, though in some he found incorrigible seceders. Not a few societies were rent to pieces, and the enemies of religion and hostile sectarists exulted in the hope of the immediate and final downfall of the denomination throughout the state. Asbury labored chiefly to promote among the distracted societies a deeper religious feeling, spiritual unity, as the best means of ecclesiastical harmony. He not only traveled and preached, but wrote many letters. His usual correspondence averaged about a thousand a year, and was a heavy burden added to his many other cares. Meanwhile he forgot no great interest of the Church. He took shelter at Dromgoole's, now in retirement on Brunswick Circuit, near North Carolina; "here," he writes, "I found a few friends, and formed a constitution for a district school, which, with a little alteration, will form a general rule for any part of the continent." By a "district school," he means a "conference" school, for, as we have seen, the Annual Con-

ferences were now called "District Conferences." He had actually devised a system of general education for the Church, proposing a boarding academy for each conference, a scheme which the denomination has made effective in our day. He held another conference near Lewisburgh, whither about forty preachers had come from the two districts in North Carolina. When again on his route he writes: "The great love and union which prevailed at the late conference makes me hope many souls will be converted in the ensuing year: an account was brought in of the conversion of about three hundred last week within its limits, chiefly in the Lowland circuits. Glory be to God! I feel that he is with us; and I have good evidence that fifteen or eighteen hundred souls have professed to have been converted in the United States within the last twelve months."

He hastened through North and entered South Carolina, riding thirty, forty, fifty miles a day, "hungry" and "cold," for it was now December, but preaching at the close of nearly every day's journey in barns, private houses, and, occasionally, new chapels of "logs or poles," with "light and ventilation plenty." He was often drenched by storms; "the unfinished state of the houses, lying on the floor, thin clothing, and inclement weather, keep me," he writes, "in a state of indisposition."

In Sumter District, S. C., he found, by Christmas day, shelter in one of those wealthy and hospitable houses which, like Perry Hall, were always open to welcome him as a prophet of God, at distant intervals of his great field. "Although the weather," he writes, "was cold and damp and unhealthy, with signs of snow, we rode forty-five miles to dear Brother Rembert's—kind

and good, rich and liberal, who has done more for the poor Methodists than any man in South Carolina. The Lord grant that he, with his whole household, may find mercy in that day!"

A bishop of Southern Methodism, speaking of "Rembert Hall," so often and so gratefully mentioned in Asbury's Journals, says: "The proprietor of this estate, James Rembert, Esq., was a Methodist gentleman of large property, who was strongly attached to Asbury. There was a room in his mansion that was appropriated to the bishop's use. Here he commonly spent a week during his annual visitation to South Carolina. It was a sweet haven, where the weather-beaten sailor found quiet waters, and bright skies, and a season of repose. Here he brought up his journal, wrote his letters, and lectured of an evening to the family and visitors and crowds of servants. Mrs. Rembert was a lady of the kindest heart: she not only had the bishop's apartments always ready and commodiously furnished, but every year her seamstress made up for him a full supply of linen, which, neatly ironed, awaited the arrival of the bishop. Rembert Hall, in my time on the Sumter Circuit, was occupied by Caleb Rembert, Esq., his honored father and mother having long before gone to heaven."[3]

Reaching Charleston, he found "the little flock in peace and a small revival among them," though here also the Church had been scathed by division. William Hammett, one of Coke's missionaries to the West Indies, had come to the United States, and had taken charge of the society in Charleston, where his remarkable natural powers of eloquence soon rendered him generally popular. He was unrivaled in the pulpits of the city, and became restless under the disciplin-

[3] Bishop Wightman, "Biog. Sketches," p. 24, Nashville, 1858.

ary administration of Methodism. He accused Coke and Asbury of tyranny. "We are considered by him," wrote Asbury, "as seceders from Methodism, because we do not wear gowns and powder, and because we did not pay sufficient respect to Mr. Wesley." He headed a secession from the young Church of the city in 1791, briefly anticipating and severely exasperating the revolt of O'Kelly and his followers in Virginia and North Carolina. Thus agitation prevailed through much of nearly one half of the territory of the Church, for the schismatic spirit spread infectiously, pamphlets were published, letters written, personal visitations made by disaffected preachers; even the new and feeble Churches beyond the Alleghanies felt the evil. Asbury accuses them of "striving to scatter firebrands and arrows through the whole continent." He accuses himself for his excessive anxiety about the result. "I am not enough in prayer," he says. "I have said more than was for the glory of God concerning those who have left the American connection, and who have reviled Mr. Wesley, Mr. Fletcher, Doctor Coke, and poor me. O that I could trust the Lord more than I do, and leave his cause wholly in his own hands!"

Hammett's secession threatened for a time almost the ruin of Methodism in Charleston. His commanding influence enabled him to erect a spacious chapel on Hasell-street, with an adjacent parsonage and lot of land. He called it Trinity Church, and his people called themselves "Primitive Methodists." A local authority records that "this body continued a distinct connection till after the death of their leader. But, alas! man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. And these good people found that ecclesiastical difficulties followed them even into their 'primitive' asylum. It

is believed that their highly talented leader found that he had undertaken a task to which he was not adequate —the task of arranging and binding together the discordant materials which he had gathered from the Church and from the world. Suffice it to say, that before he went hence he had his troubles among his flock. Many of them returned to the fold where they had been formerly fed, some went to other Churches, and not a few went back to the world. After the death of Mr. Hammett the congregation was served by a Mr. Brazier, who had formerly been a missionary in the West Indies. This gentleman, after ministering to them a short time, concluded that his temporal interest might be better served by selling the church. He accordingly bargained it away to a Protestant Epispal clergyman. The Protestant Episcopalians took possession of it, built pews in it, and had it dedicated according to their forms. But the original trustees were not disposed to submit tamely to these proceedings. A lawsuit was the consequence, which resulted favorably to the trustees; the Church was restored to them, and the congregation was served sometimes by one, and sometimes by another, until at length they remembered the days of old, and invited the Methodist preachers to occupy the pulpit, which at first they did only a part of the time. But finally an amicable arrangement was made by which they became dentified with the Methodist Episcopal Church; the nion so happily formed has been most graciously emented by God's blessing; and we may only say urther on this point, that all the Churches and parsonages built by the 'Primitive Methodists,' have passed to our use." [3]

[3] Bishop Andrew, in Meth. Mag., 1830, p. 20.

Hammett built a second church in the suburbs of the city. Several local preachers joined him, and he evidently contemplated a somewhat general organization. His party erected a church in Georgetown, one also in Savannah, another in Wilmington, N. C., where they gathered a large congregation of blacks. William Meredith had charge of the latter society; he subsequently withdrew from Hammett, and dying in 1799, left his chapel, parsonage, and society to the care of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Most of the other societies returned to the parent Church. Bishop Coke and Thomas Morrell published pamphlets in reply to Hammett. He died in 1803, about eleven years after his secession, and the schism became extinct.[4]

Asbury spent about a week in the city, holding a conference and preaching incessantly; he then passed into Georgia, and rested at Washington, where he writes: "We met our dear brethren in conference. We had great peace and union; the Carolina preachers came up to change with those in Georgia; all things happened well. Bless the Lord, O my soul! We now agreed to unite the Georgia and South Carolina conferences —to meet in the fork of Seleuda and Broad Rivers, on the first of January, 1794. Our sitting ended in exceeding great love. We had sacrament, love-feast, and ordination. I felt very serious, and was very pointed on Acts xx, 26, 27. I have now had an opportunity of speaking in Washington: most of the people attended to hear *this man that rambles through the United States.*"

He turned toward Savannah, to "see the former walks of dear Wesley and Whitefield," whom "he hoped to meet in the New Jerusalem." On the last day of

[4] Lee's Hist. of Meth., p. 205.

February, 1793, he reached the city, and the next day went twelve miles to view the ruins of Whitefield's Orphan House. He gazed on the blackened walls with sadness, deepening into "awe." "The wings" were "yet standing, though much injured, and the school-house still more." A mass of ruins, the only memorial of a great and benevolent scheme, it was also the memento of a great Methodistic evangelist, whom he revered as his own precursor in the new world, the man who had heralded the still advancing host of itinerants. If the ostensible design of the institution had failed, it had accomplished a greater result which was destined never to fail: it had been the center of American attraction to its founder, had prompted his thirteen passages across the Atlantic, and had thus led to those extraordinary evangelical travels and labors, from Georgia to Maine, which quickened with spiritual life the Protestantism of the continent, and opened the career of Methodism in the western hemisphere. Asbury returned with pensive yet hopeful reflections to Savannah and resumed his work, preaching the same night. "I reflected," he says, "upon the present ruins of the Orphan House, and taking a view of the money expended, the persons employed, the preachers sent over, I was led to inquire, Where are they? and how has it sped?" They were all "swallowed up;" the whole country looked "wretched" to him; "but," he adds, "here are souls, precious souls, worth worlds."

He was soon returning through South Carolina, "traveling through heavy rains and deep swamps, in dark nights, improving" himself, as his "horseback study, in the Hebrew tones and points." He paused again at Charleston, where he promoted a subscription for the erection of a new church, preached, held class

meetings, assembled the leaders and stewards, and visited from house to house. His congregations included about five hundred hearers, three fifths of them blacks. He had now summed up the Minutes for the ecclesiastical year. "We have," he writes, "two hundred and seventeen traveling preachers, and about fifty thousand members, in the United States. Glory to God in the highest!" He spent about two weeks in Charleston fortifying the society against its schismatic troubles. We afterward trace him among the western mountains of North Carolina, "wrestling with floods," his food "Indian bread and fried bacon," and his "bed set upon forks, and clapboards laid across, in an earthen floor cabin." He crossed the Alleghanies through perilous difficulties, and was again in the Great West, where he spent about six weeks among the emigrant settlements of Tennessee and Kentucky, convoyed sometimes by armed guards, and enduring the severest privations and fatigues. By the middle of May he was again among the heights of the Virginia mountains, sheltered in the comfortable home of the widow of General Russell, the sister of Patrick Henry, and one of the "elect ladies" of Methodism. The most romantic passages of his journals are his brief records of his adventures among the Alleghanies, and often at the close of weary days does he write, in log cabins, that so many miles yet remain before he can reach "General Russell's," his longed-for resting-place. He now writes: "I am very solemn. I feel the want of the dear man who, I trust, is now in Abraham's bosom, and hope ere long to see him there. He was a general officer in the continental army, where he underwent great fatigue: he was powerfully brought to God, and for a few years past was a living flame, and a blessing to his neighborhood. He

went in the dead of winter on a visit to his friends, was seized with an influenza, and ended his life from home. O that the Gospel may continue in this house! I preached on Heb. xii, 1–4, and there followed several exhortations. We then administered the sacrament, and there was weeping and shouting among the people; our exercises lasted about five hours." Such scenes often occurred there, for Mrs. Russell kept her mansion always open, not only for the shelter of the wayworn itinerants, but as a sanctuary for the mountaineer settlers, who flocked thither from miles around to hear the Gospel. "She was," says an itinerant who enjoyed her hospitalities, "eloquent like her brother, a woman of exemplary piety."[5] Like most of the Methodist women of her day, she exhorted and prayed in public. Her home was a light-house shining afar among the Alleghanies.[6]

But even here, in one of the most comfortable shelters then to be found on the frontier, Asbury could find little repose; the "care of all the Churches" was upon him, and he had again entered the state where the schismatic distractions of O'Kelly's party were rending the infant

[5] Rev. Jacob Young's "Autobiography of a Pioneer," p. 128.

[6] No doubt the reader would like to know the sequel of the Russell family. Rev. William Burke informs us that, "in the fall of 1792, General Russell and family made a visit to the eastern part of Virginia, among their old friends and relations. The general was taken sick, and died. His daughter, Chloe Russell, had just married a traveling preacher by the name of Hubbard Saunders. During their visit, Miss Sarah Campbell, Mrs. Russell's daughter, daughter of General Campbell, who distinguished himself at the battle of King's Mountain, was married to Francis Preston, Esq., of Virginia. Sarah was among the first-fruits of Methodism in the West. She became the mother of one of South Carolina's most gifted sons, whose eloquence has often been heard in the Senate chamber at Washington, namely, Hon. William C. Preston."—*Wakeley's* "*Heroes*," p. 204. See also vol. ii, p. 350; and "Women of Methodism," p. 356. New York, 1866.

societies. "I have little rest by night or by day," he writes under this hospitable roof. "Lord, help thy poor dust! I feel unexpected storms—from various quarters; perhaps they are designed for my humiliation. It is a sin in thought that I am afraid of: none but Jesus can support us, by his merit, by his Spirit, his righteousness, his intercession; that is, Christ in all, for all, through all, and in every means, and word, and work."

In two days he was in the saddle and away again, among the mountain passes, and over the cliffs, forty five miles a day, "steeped in rain," and "hunger within." On the third day he was at Rehoboth, on the Green Briar, where he met the mountaineer itinerants in conference. "I was greatly comforted," he says, "at the sight of Brothers B. J. and Ellis Cox; we had peace in our conference, and were happy in our cabin." But the wayworn evangelists bring afflicting intelligence of the "mischief begun by O'Kelly" and "some of the local preachers in the lower parts of Virginia;" he "wrote many letters to the south district to confirm the souls of the people, and guard them against the division." Rains for more than a week had deranged the roads; but he pressed forward, troubled by nothing so much as by the "discord sown by Satan" among the societies. All along these routes, however, the people beheld his apostolic devotion and energy with wonder and veneration, and many were ready, "if it had been possible, to pluck out their own eyes" and give them to him. On his way "an old German," he says, "met me, shook me by the hand, and said he wished he might be worthy to wash my feet. Ah, thought I, if you knew what a poor sinful creature I am, you would hardly look at one so unworthy; but Jesus lives. O precious Christ, thou art mine and I am thine!"

By the middle of June he was again in Maryland, holding a conference at Old Town; where, he says, "we had much consolation in meeting the brethren of these districts, whose names only were known to each other." He preached to them on the troubles of the day from the text, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee." In three days he was again away. "Our roads are rough," he says; "I am sick; our fare is coarse; but it is enough—I am to die." Such was his Christian philosophy. He penetrates to the obscure societies, already reported, among the hidden valleys of the Juniata, to Northumberland and Wyoming, and soon we retrace him through Maryland.

Such are mere glimpses (all that we can get) of Asbury's first southern labors after the General Conference of 1792. But by the middle of September, 1793, he re-entered the same field. On his way he confronted the yellow fever, raging in Philadelphia, with no other inconvenience from his courage than the alarms of the towns through which he hastened, in Delaware and Maryland, and the opposition of the sanitary cordons. In Virginia, light began to dawn upon the disturbed prospects of the Church, and he "felt his mind greatly eased relative to those who had lately separated, and set out as reformers." At Petersburg he held a conference. "The preachers," he writes, "were united, and the Lord was with us of a truth. There were fifty-five present. I had some difficulties respecting the stations; but there was a willingness among the brethren to go where they were appointed, and all was well. Our disaffected brethren have had a meeting at the Piney Grove, in Amelia circuit, and appointed three men to attend this conference. One of these delegates appears to be satisfied, and has received ordination among us

since he was delegated by them; the other two appeared, and we gave them a long talk. My mind has been closely employed in the business of the conference, so that I have slept only about sixteen hours in four nights."

By the 9th of December he is in Lewisburg, North Carolina; and holds a conference, about a mile from the town, at Green Hill's. "Great peace and unity," he says, "prevailed among us. The preachers cheerfully signed an instrument, expressing their determination to submit to, and abide by, what the General Conference has done."

Through all sorts of hardships he again penetrates South Carolina, to face the trials of Charleston. Hastening from Camden about the end of December, he writes: "We set out early, and came through pine and oak barrens, twenty-five miles: about one o'clock I was willing to sit down and rest. I have lately felt all the grace I had put to trial; through mercy I am kept from sin, and long to be perfect in faith and patience, love and suffering: I am sometimes tempted to wish to die; but I fear it is wrong: I rather choose to wait the Lord's time."

On the last day of the year his brief record introduces us to a characteristic scene of the country and the times—a conference in the wilderness—no town or village is named as its locality, only the humble huts of the brethren. "We rode," he says, "forty-five miles to Brother Cook's, on Broad River; and the next day to brother Finch's: here we are to have about thirty preachers from South Carolina and Georgia. We were straitened for room, having only twelve feet square to confer, sleep, and for the accommodation of those who were sick. Brother B. was attacked with the dysentery. On Wednesday,

January 1, 1794, we removed Brother B. into a room without fire. We hastened the business of our conference as fast as we could. After sitting in a close room with a very large fire, I retired into the woods nearly an hour, and was seized with a severe chill, an inveterate cough and fever, and a sick stomach: with difficulty I sat in conference the following day; and I could get but little rest; Brother B.'s moving so frequently, and the brethren's talking, disturbed me. Sick as I was, I had to ordain four elders and six deacons; never did I perform with such a burden. I took a powerful emetic. I was attended by Doctor D. I found I must go somewhere to get rest. The day was cloudy, and threatened snow; however, Brother R. E. and myself made out to get seven miles to dear old Brother A. Yeargin's house. The next day came on a heavy fall of snow, which continued two days, and was from six to ten inches deep. I had to let some blood. I must be humbled before the Lord, and have great searching of heart."

His next record is that of a thirty miles' ride, though he was so weak "that his exercise and clothing almost overcame" him. On the 20th of January, 1794, he was again in Charleston, where he spent nearly a month preaching, visiting from house to house, and confirming the Church. Meanwhile he writes, "I feel restless to move on, and my wish is to die in the field. I have had a time of deep dejection of spirits, affliction of body, loss of sleep, and trouble of soul. I find this to be a barren place; I long to go to my work. When gloomy melancholy comes on, I find it best to think as little as may be about distressing subjects. It seems as if a strange providence holds me here: I am sometimes afraid to eat, drink, or even to talk unless it be of God.

and religion. I am now preparing to leave the city, where I have experienced consolation, afflictions, tribulations, and labor."

On the first of March he set out, and again we can trace him through difficulties such as, in modern times, seem incredible to the traveler in the same regions. "Isaac Smith, in all these difficulties and trials of swamps, colds, rains, and starvation, was my faithful companion. After riding twenty-seven miles without eating, how good were the potatoes and fried gammon! I confess my soul and body have been sorely tried. What blanks are in this country—and how much worse are rice plantations! If a man-of-war is 'a floating hell,' these are standing ones: wicked masters, overseers, and negroes—cursing, drinking—no Sabbaths; no sermons. But hush! perhaps my journal will never see the light; and if it does, matters may mend before that time; and it is probable I shall be beyond their envy or good will."

By the time he reached the Catawba River he ha ridden nearly a thousand miles in three months, "stop ping three weeks of the time with great reluctance' at conferences, and on other important occasions. He completed the thousand miles at the hazard of his life in fording the river, wandering till after midnight, lost in the woods, under a storm of rain, thunder, and lightning, and finding unexpected shelter, at last, at a plantation, "with feet and legs wet for six or seven hours." He thus records the scene: "I directed my course, in company with my faithful fellow-laborer, Tobias Gibson, up the Catabaw, settled mostly by the Dutch. A barren spot for religion. Having ridden in pain twenty-four miles we came, weary and hungry, to O.'s tavern, and were glad to take what came to hand.

Four miles forward we came to Howe's Ford, upon Catawba River, where we could get neither a canoe nor guide. We entered the water in an improper place, and were soon among the rocks and in the whirlpools; my head swam, and my horse was affrighted; the water was to my knees, and it was with difficulty we retreated to the same shore. We then called to a man on the other side, who came and piloted us across, for which I paid him well. My horse being afraid to take the water a second time, Brother Gibson crossed, and sent me his, and our guide took mine across. We went on, but our troubles were not at an end; night came on, and it was very dark. It rained heavily, with powerful lightning and thunder. We could not find the path that turned out to Connell's. In this situation we continued until midnight or past; at last we found a path which we followed till we came to dear old Father Harper's plantation; we made for the house, and called; he answered, but wondered who it could be; he inquired whence we came; I told him we would tell that when we came in, for it was raining so powerfully we had not much time to talk. When I came dripping into the house, he cried, 'God bless your soul, is it Brother Asbury? wife, get up.'"

"My soul," he exclaims, "enjoys peace: but O! for more of God! This campaign has made me 'groan, being burdened.' Bad news on my coming to the mountains; neither preachers nor elders have visited Swannie since last October; poor people—poor preachers that are not more stable: but all flesh is grass, and I am grass. I desire the dear preachers to be as I am in the work: I have no interest, no passions, in their appointments; my only aim is to care and provide for the flock of Christ. I feel that my sufferings have been good preach-

ing to me, especially in crossing the waters. I feel resolved to be wholly the Lord's, weak as I am; I have done nothing, I am nothing; only for Christ! or I had long since been cut off as an unfaithful servant; Christ is all, and in all I do, or it had not been done; or when done, had by no means been acceptable. I have written several letters to the westward to supply my lack of service. I am mightily wrought upon for New Hampshire, Province of Maine, Vermont, and Lower Canada."

Such was this greatest apostle of modern Christendom. Scarcely recognized by the civil or ecclesiastical historians of the country, he was nevertheless unconsciously placing his name foremost on the ecclesiastical annals of the new world; nor can we wonder, after such labors, that in our day the followers of the evangelic banner which he thus bore forward, over mountains, wildernesses, and floods, constitute one half the Protestant communicants of the New World.

On reaching Charlotte county, Va., in the latter part of April, he learns that "there is sad work with those who had left" the denomination; yet matters were not desperate. "If the real cause of this division were known, I think it would appear, that one wanted to be immovably fixed in a district; another wanted money; a third wanted ordination; a fourth wanted liberty to do as he pleased about slaves, and not to be called to an account," etc.

He found it necessary to recite in his congregations the history of these disputes, to vindicate his episcopal administration, to encounter personal rebuffs from former Methodists. "O that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place!" he writes; "a dreadful rumor followed me from last Sabbath. I felt humble and thankful that

I could suffer; I think more of religion now than ever. O my God, I am thine; glory to Christ forever!" He rejoiced, however, to find in Bedford county "thirteen societies of Methodists, three or four of them large, and about ten local preachers, who labor for Christ and souls." Reaching the western mountains, he held a conference and greeted some of the Kentucky preachers, who had come across the Alleghanies to counsel with him. He found "a valuable chapel at Newton, and three local preachers;" at Charleston, "a good house and one local preacher;" at Winchester, "a good meeting-house." "Sick, wet, and weary," he journeyed on, still preaching, though hardly able to make the people hear. "My mind," he says, "is in peace, but I feel the spiritual death of the people. I am now on the head branches of Opecken. I stopped a while at J. H.'s, and then came on to Shepherdstown. It was a very instructing time to me; I cannot pretend to preach, yet I talk a little to the dear people, who flock to see and hear me by hundreds. I hope to be as much resigned to a life of affliction as a life of health; and thus may I be perfect in love and wholly crucified with Christ! I concluded, after my high fever, and my being forced to bed, that it was out of the question for me to attempt to speak; but when I saw the people coming on every side, and thought 'this may be the last time,' and considered I had not been there for nearly five years, I took my staff, faintly ascended the hill, and held forth on 1 John i, 6, 7, and felt strengthened, having a clear view of the word of God. After meeting we administered the sacrament, and I then returned to my bed. I preached at Fredericktown. Rode to Liberty: when I came there I was so faint, and my strength so spent, that I felt as if I could by no means attempt to preach;

but after Brother R. had sung a hymn and prayed, I made a feeble attempt on Gal. i, 11, 12."

On the 18th of June he once more found genial shelter in Baltimore, then the headquarters of all his episcopal campaigns. He paused, however, but four or five days, and hastened on to the north and the east, as far as Boston and Lynn. By the middle of October he was back again; a day of hospitable shelter at Perry Hall, a week of labor in Baltimore, at the conference, and the southern campaign is reopened. Its events are stirring, but too similar to those already recorded to need recital; it was followed by another passage over the Alleghanies into Tennessee. On the 21st of May he was again in Baltimore, but saddened by the news of the death of one of his "best friends in America," Judge White, of Kent county, Md., whose important services to early Methodism have already made an interesting episode in our narrative.[6] "This news," writes the bishop," was attended with an awful shock to me. I have met with nothing like it in the death of any friend on the continent. Lord, help us all to live out our short day to thy glory! I have lived days, weeks, and months in his house. O that his removal may be sanctified to my good and the good of the family! He was about sixty-five years of age. He was a friend to the poor and oppressed; he had been a professed Churchman, and was united to the Methodist connection about seventeen or eighteen years. His house and heart were always open; and he was a faithful friend to liberty, in spirit and practice; he was a most indulgent husband, a tender father, and a most affectionate friend. He professed perfect love, and great peace, living and dying. I preached twice in town, and was delivered from my

[6] See vol. ii, p. 307.

gloomy state of mind. I spent part of the week visiting from house to house. I feel happy in speaking to all I find, whether parents, children, or servants; I see no other way; the common means will not do; Baxter, Wesley, and our Form of Discipline, say, 'Go into every house:' I would go further, and say, Go into every kitchen and shop; address all, aged and young, on the salvation of their souls."

Excessive work relieved him, but only temporarily; the ravages of death among his old companions in the struggles and success of Methodism, deeply affected him; he sought refuge and consolation with Bassett, at Bohemia Manor, a scene thronged with old memories. "I have great inward distress," he writes, for here he was again reminded that all things pass away. "Dear Brother B., who attended me with his carriage to North East the last time I was here, is now gone to rest. O how short is the life of man! O my Lord, help me through all my afflictions! Ah! what a comfortable thing it is to be among the ancient Methodists! But this is not always my place; indeed, it cannot be. Still under awful depression. I am not conscious of any sin, even in thought. I feel a degree of willingness to decline, die, and enter into rest." Yet he took courage. "I have a hope that God is preparing me for greater usefulness in my latter days. O how happy should I be, if after laboring thirty years to very little profit, as I sometimes fear, it should hereafter appear that hundreds have been converted by my ministry! I came to the dwelling house of my dear friend Judge White; it was like his funeral to me."

Again to the north and east, to Boston, Mass., and round about to Bennington, Vt., and back to Baltimore by the middle of October, for another southern

campaign—journeying, preaching, holding conferences, meeting classes, and still visiting from house to house in the places where he had occasion to delay a few days—such are the events which crowd his journals, that extraordinary record which hastens us along with eager interest, while almost vexing us with the slightness, the brevity of its notes—so meager in details, yet so burdened with romantic significance. In his next southern tour he found that "the connection had regained its proper tone in Virginia, after having been kept out of tune for five years by the unhappy division." And at Charleston, S. C., also, he was cheered with improved prospects. "My soul," he says, "felt joyful and solemn at the thoughts of a revival of religion in Charleston. I find several young persons brought into the fold of Christ. Several of the preachers came into the city to conference. We had a melting time at the love-feast at Brother Wells's. On Friday, January 1, 1796, I gave them a sermon suited to the beginning of the year, and the sacred fire was felt. Saturday, 2, we began our conference. Lord's day, 3, was a day of extraordinary divine power, particularly at the sacrament; white and black cried out and shouted the praises of God. Monday, 4, we again entered on the business of the conference; present, about twenty members and seven graduates. Tuesday, 5, continued our business; we have great peace and love—see eye to eye, and heart to heart. Thursday, 7, we observed as a day of fasting and humiliation, to seek the blessing of God on the conference. We began, continued, and parted in the greatest peace and union. Friday, 8, most of our brethren took their leave of the city, and I had time for recollection."

He continued there till the beginning of March, an

unusual delay, but the welfare of the local Church required it. He had large congregations—from ten hundred to twelve hundred persons. He met severally all the classes, black and white, fifteen in number, and visited many families, and wrote more than three hundred pages on subjects interesting to the society and connection. He received here the sad news of the destruction of Cokesbury College by fire—the defeat of the first experiment of the Church in education, with a loss of fifty thousand dollars. On the 3d of March he departed for Georgia, and after itinerating there over more than two hundred miles, set his face toward the northwest again, passed into the Alleghany mountains and ranged about among them, sometimes in Tennessee, sometimes in North Carolina and Virginia, till he emerged on their west in Pennsylvania about the end of May. The difficulties of his way were incredible. Having no mercy on himself, he yet scrupled to impose such hardships on any one else. "I doubt," he says, as he escaped from them, "whether I shall ever request any person to come and meet me again at the levels of Green Briar, or to accompany me across these mountains again, as Daniel Hitt has now done. O how checkered is life! How thankful ought I to be that I am here safe, with life and limbs, in peace and plenty."

By the 22d of June he had re-entered Baltimore; he had traveled on horseback, and over the worst of roads, twenty-three hundred miles since he last left it. The remainder of the time before the next General Conference was spent in another northern tour, whither, as over his journeys through the middle and western states during the four years, we shall hereafter have occasion to follow him. Meanwhile other laborers and events recall our attention to the south.

CHAPTER III.

METHODISM IN THE SOUTH CONTINUED—1792–1796.

Benjamin Abbott in Maryland — His Singular Power — Remarkable Examples — Scenes at Quarterly Meetings — His Health fails — His Death — His Character — Whitecoat in Maryland — Henry Smith and Francis M'Cormick — William M'Kendree's early Itinerant Life — Anecdotes — His Character — Enoch George — John Easter — Illustrations of George's Life and Character — Hope Hull's Labors — His Prayer in a Ball-room — Interest in Education — Character — Coleman and Simon Carlisle — Remarkable Charge and Deliverance — Stephen G. Roszel — Joshua Wells — Great Men of Southern Methodism — Deaths of Preachers — Statistical Results.

Many mighty men were Asbury's colaborers in the southern states in the quadrennial period from 1792 to 1796; and many, destined to be pre-eminent at a later day, were rising up in the yet feeble and obscure conferences of that part of the continent.

Benjamin Abbott's appointments for the brief remainder of his life[1] were in Maryland. His journals become more scanty than in the years through which we have already followed him, but they record the same extraordinary effects of his preaching, hearers falling under the word "like men slain in battle," the "opening of the windows of heaven, and the skies pouring down righteousness, so that the people fell before the Lord." We have had occasion to discuss the astonishing physical and psychological phenomena which attended his ministrations, and to state the cautious interpretation of such anomalies given by the best Methodist authorities. Though not peculiar to his preaching, they were pecu-

[1] Minutes, vol. i; Ffirth's Life of Abbott.

liarly powerful with him. They were indeed habitual, almost invariable effects of his singular eloquence, for he was eloquent in the best sense of the word. Uneducated, rough, rude even, in speech and manner, his fervid piety and his genial human sympathy made his weather-worn features glow as with a divine light, and intoned his voice with a strange, a magnetic, an irresistible pathos and power. There may have been a psychological, perhaps a physiological, as well as a moral element in this marvelous power, a mystery which future science may render more intelligible; be this as it may, Benjamin Abbott led a divine life on earth, walking with God, like Enoch, from day to day, and the hardiest, the most ruffian men who came within his presence, the clamorous rabble that frequently thronged his congregations, fell back, or sank prostrate before him, seeing "his face as it had been the face of an angel;" and if they attempted, as they often did, to escape by the doors or the windows, his voice would sometimes smite them down like lightning. His casual conversation, always religious, his social or domestic prayers, had the same effect. We continually read not merely of "God attending the word, with the energy of the Holy Ghost, in such manner that numbers fell to the floor," that "the wicked flew to the doors," that "there was a shaking among the dry bones," but that at his temporary lodging-places, "in family prayer, the Lord was with him of a truth," and similar wonders attended him. If he went into a house to baptize a child, we hear of like effects—the "mother trembling in every joint, four persons falling to the floor, one professing that God has sanctified her soul." In some cases, as we have seen, most, or even all his congregation, save himself, were thus prostrated. And, however morally dangerous

such scenes might seem to be, (physically they never were injurious,) they appear to have been uniformly followed with salutary results. Few preachers, perhaps no other one of his day, reclaimed more men from gross vice. His mission seemed especially to such.

He now kept the whole Eastern Shore of Maryland astir with religious interest. Even those whose religious education had taught them to associate quietude with piety, were infected with the excitement. "In the morning," he writes, "we had a melting time; many wept. In the afternoon the Lord poured out his Spirit and the slain fell before him like dead men; others lay as in the agonies of death, entreating God to have mercy on their souls; some found peace. Glory to God, many in this town seemed alarmed of their danger; may the Lord increase their number. A girl who lived with a Quaker was cut to the heart in such a manner that they did not know how to get her home; I went to see her, and found many round her, both white and black. She lay as one near her last gasp; I kneeled down and besought God for her deliverance, and in a few minutes she broke out in raptures of joy, crying out, 'Let me go to Jesus!' repeating it several times; then she arose and went home. Glory to God! for what my eyes saw my ears heard, and soul felt that day, of the blessed Spirit. The meeting continued from three o'clock until evening."

Family groups, bearing him in their carriages to their homes, from his meetings, were "awakened, "converted," "sanctified," "shouted the praises of God," "lost their strength" or consciousness, as he conversed with them on the route. In love-feasts, sometimes, not one could give the usual narration of Christian experience, but, under the introductory devotions, "the Lord

so laid his hand upon them, that sinners trembled and fell to the floor," and the customary exercises had to give way to prayer and praise. Again we read: "I held prayer meeting, and the Lord manifested his love among us. There was a shaking among the dry bones. One lay as if she were dead for nearly two hours, and then came to with praises to God for her deliverance, with great raptures of joy. The children of God were filled with joy unspeakable. How inexpressible are the pleasures of those who are filled with the raptures of a Saviour's love! Ecstatic pause! 'Silence heightens heaven!' I held prayer meeting and the power of the Lord fell upon the people in such a manner that the slain lay all over the floor. Several were converted to God; one or two professed sanctification: glory to God, he carried on his own work." Again, "the Lord attended the word with power, and divers fell before him like Dagon before the ark. I was obliged to leave the slain on the floor in order to attend my next appointment, where I found a large congregation to whom I preached. It was a day of his power; he worked and none could hinder him." Again, "I preached with life and power, and the Lord manifested his presence among us; some cried for mercy, and a solemn awe sat on many faces. I went to my next appointment, and preached to a large congregation. The Lord laid to his helping hand, and there was a mighty shaking among the dry bones; divers persons lay through the house, as dead men slain by the mighty power of God. The same Jesus who raised Lazarus from the dead, raised up nine persons, that we could ascertain, to praise him as a sin-pardoning God; and how many more that we could not ascertain, God only knows; for many wept, and some shouted praises.

Glory to God, this was a day that will be long remembered by many precious souls. I was as happy as I could live in the body."

As the people returned to their homes they were heard praising God along the highways. And such scenes were not occasional or exceptional; nearly every day's record reports them, for there was hardly a day in which he did not hold a meeting, and hardly a meeting without immediate results. As facts of the times, not uncommon in any part of the Church, they are essential to a faithful record of its history, however our modern criticism, or more decorous ideas of religious life, may judge them.

On the more important or festival occasions of the Church, especially at the great quarterly meetings of the time, this spiritual enthusiasm kindled still higher, and spread out like a flame over whole circuits. They were jubilees to Abbott. On one of them he says: "Our meeting began at six o'clock in the morning, and when we had sung and prayed, the power of God came down in such a manner that the slain lay all through the house. Some seemed lost in the ocean of God's love, some professed justification, and others, that God had sanctified their souls. This meeting was so powerful that but one attempted to speak her experience in love feast; while she was speaking, she sunk down, crying out, God has made me all love! Immediately the house was filled with cries and praises to God; some trembled and were astonished. We had to carry the slain out of the house, in order to make room that the people might come in for the public preaching; and when we had sung and prayed the presence of the Lord came down as in the days of old, and the house was filled with his glory; the people fell before him like men slain

in battle. It was a great day of God's power to many souls; some professed sanctification, some justification. This was a day of days to my soul. The windows being open, there were hundreds outside gazing at those in the house who were slain before the Lord; but they lay both in the house and out of it. Prayers were put up to God, both within and without, in behalf of the penitents and mourners. I trust that many date their conviction, and others their conversion from that quarterly meeting."

If he deviated for such special occasions to other circuits, the same extraordinary scenes attended him. "I went," he writes, "to quarterly meeting on Dover circuit; we had a happy day. On Sunday, in love-feast, the Lord God of Elijah, who answereth by fire, poured out his Spirit. 'Elijah the prophet came near, and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, etc. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, etc. Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifices, etc. And when the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, the Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God.' 1 Kings xviii, 36–39. So on this day, when the fire of the Lord came down, the people fell and acknowledged the power of God; and the slain lay all about the house; some were carried out as dead men and women. The house was filled with the glory of Israel's God, who spoke peace to mourners, while sinners were cut to the heart. Glory to God, it was a high day to my own soul. It was thought there were about fifteen hundred looking on, with wonder and amazement at the mighty power of God, which caused the powers of hell to shake and give

way; many of the spectators trembled and were astonished; numbers professed faith in Christ, and others sanctifying grace; God's dear children, generally, were refreshed. This was one of the days of the Son of man. On Tuesday, in family prayer, the power of God came down wonderfully upon us; four fell to the floor, and they found 'Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth,' to the joy of their souls."

Of course there could be no stagnation in the region through which such a man traveled sounding his trumpet daily; we read that "the flame spread around the circuit, and many were brought to the knowledge of God." He continued these labors till May, 1795, when, failing in health, he returned to his home in New Jersey, and was never able to resume his travels on a circuit. He had been suffering, in Maryland, for three months from fever and ague. On returning to New Jersey he frequently exerted his little remaining strength in religious meetings, until June, 1796, when he rapidly failed; but his soul remained unclouded to the last. He testified that "perfect love casteth out fear, and he that feareth is not made perfect in love:" and that he believed a state attainable in this life, through grace, that "would enable us to shout victory to God and the Lamb, through the valley of the shadow of death." Also, that he had seen many leave this world in "the greatest transport of joy imaginable. And for my part," he added, "I can call God to witness, that death is no terror to me! I am ready to meet my God if it were now!"

On the 13th of August he was in "excruciating pain," "which he bore with Christian patience and resignation. He was happy in God, and rejoiced at his approaching dissolution. He appeared to possess his

rational faculties to his last moments; and for some time previous was delivered from pain, to the joy of his friends; his countenance continued joyful, heavenly, and serene. 'Glory to God!' he exclaimed, 'I see heaven sweetly opened before me!'"

The next day he was no more. He died as he had lived, "shouting!" "Glory! glory! glory!" are his last utterances recorded by his biographer, who attended him in death. He uttered them "clapping his hands, in the greatest ecstacies of joy imaginable." The ruling passion was strong in death.

Thus passes from the scene of our story one of its most remarkable characters. He had led hosts of souls from the lowest abysses of vice into a good life and into the Church, from the Hudson to the Chesapeake. He has been a problem to students of our history. I have already endeavored to give the solution of that problem; but his singular yet most effective life will ever remain a marvel, if not a mystery. An extraordinary individuality of character, sanctified by extraordinary endowments of divine grace, must be its chief explanation. They fitted him for a peculiar work, and he did it thoroughly, with all his might and to the end. All his characteristics were extreme; we have seen the vices of his youth, the extreme struggles of his early Christian experience, and how, like the godly "dreamer of Bedford jail," he rose from the struggle into a saintly, a genial, and a powerful life. His sincerity, purity, tenderness, and humility, vindicated his character even to the severest accusers of the wonders of his ministry. A Methodist citizen of Philadelphia, who knew him well for twenty years, and in whose house he spent some time in his last sickness, says "he used frequently to tell me of his life, and manner of living, during his un-

regenerate state. While he was an apprentice in Philadelphia he was a wicked lad, associated with bad company. He used to quarrel and fight frequently. At times, by fighting, he has had his clothes so bloody, that he has stripped them off and washed them in the night at the pumps in the streets; and frequently, instead of going home, he used to sleep in the Quaker burying ground, between the graves; feeling, at that time, no terror from the living or the dead, by night or by day; for he feared not God nor regarded man. When he became a man he was particularly noted as a great fighter; and but few excelled him in divers kinds of vice. He has been known to leave his business, and his dinner, and to walk several miles to meet a noted fighter, in order to show his manhood and bravery in that line. He frequently had to appear before the courts of justice on account of these wicked courses; and he generally pleaded guilty. At one of those courts a certain gentleman, to whose care public peace and justice were committed, took a private opportunity to prevail on him to turn out and fight a man who was there, for which he treated him with a bowl of punch. Surely his conversion was a remarkable instance of sovereign grace and divine mercy. The lion became the lamb! The hero in the service of the devil became a bold veteran in the service of God. After his conversion, numbers had old grudges against him, and sought to ensnare him in divers ways; but, by grace, he stood firm, and immovably attached to the cause of religion, maintaining a bold, uniform, and circumspect life. On a certain occasion, after his reformation, he had to appear before the grand jury, and before they entered on the business for which he was called, he said to the jury, 'Let us first go to prayer!' He prayed, they had a

solemn time, and one of the jury was struck under conviction. He was much persecuted by the ungodly; but although his oppositions were many, he was neverthe less remarkably useful in his ministry, and in visiting the sick and distressed."

His later character is thus drawn by the same familiar friend: "He was, in my opinion, a man of the greatest faith I ever was acquainted with. He was an agreeable neighbor and social friend; plain in his manners and deportment; pleasant in his conversation; meek and humble in his spirit. I do not recollect that I ever saw him even appear to be out of temper, so great was the work grace had done for him. He appeared, as far as I could judge, to travail in spirit continually for precious souls. With great zeal and faith he used to urge conviction, repentance, and conversion on the ungodly; and among professors, he, with equal warmth of zeal and love, would insist on sanctification, and the Lord remarkably blessed his labors. The divine power of sovereign grace attended his ministry more wonderfully and constantly than any one I ever was acquainted with, to the conviction and conversion of sinners, and to the sanctification of believers. Through his instrumentality there was a great reformation among the people."

No man was more loved by good men who intimately knew him; they deemed his presence under their roofs a sanctifying blessing. The one from whom I have cited says: "He had remarkable patience and resignation, which was visible and wonderful to the family; he appeared all love, and was heavenly in his conversation. I felt a strong desire that, if it were the will of God, he might die at my house. I should have esteemed it an honor conferred on me by Providence, had so eminent a saint and servant of God ended his days under my roof.

But he removed in the spring of 1796 to the Jerseys, where he lingered out a few months in weakness and pain of body, but in peace and happiness of soul; then 'closed his eyes to see his God.'"

He died aged about sixty-four years, had been a Methodist nearly twenty-four years, a local preacher more than sixteen, a traveling preacher more than seven. His ministerial brethren characterized him in their Conference Minutes "as one of the wonders of America, no man's copy; an uncommon zealot for the blessed work of sanctification, he preaching it on all occasions and in all congregations, and what was best of all, living it. He was an innocent, holy man; he was seldom heard to speak anything but about God and religion; his whole soul was often overwhelmed with the power of God. He was known to hundreds as a truly primitive Methodist preacher, and a man full of faith and the Holy Ghost."[2]

Whatcoat has left us but a page or two respecting his labors in this period. He was Abbott's presiding elder, most of the time, on the Maryland peninsula. Grave, but fervidly pious, he wondered while he rejoiced at the results of Abbott's preaching. An extraordinary revival spread over his extended district. 'We had large congregations, and many blessed revivals in different parts of the district," he says: "Our quarterly meetings were generally comfortable, lively, and profitable. Some appeared extraordinary; souls were suddenly struck with convictions, and fell to the ground, roaring out for the disquietness of their souls, as though almost dead, and after a while starting up and praising God, as though heaven were come into their souls; others were as much concerned for a cleaner heart, and as fully delivered. I

[2] Minutes, 1796.

had to attend forty-eight quarterly meetings in the space of twelve months while on this district."

Henry Smith entered the field of the itinerancy in the present period—a man venerable throughout the Church, in our own day, familiar to most of its people by his long and widely-extended services, and his frequent published letters, dated from "Pilgrim's Rest," Baltimore county, on the early events of our history.[3] When ninety-four years old he could say, "I am now, I believe, the only link in the old Baltimore Conference connecting our early preachers with the present race. When but a boy I heard Rev. Mr. Naisy preach in an old Episcopal church near Charlestown, Virginia. He had then taken the ground. I was intimately acquainted with William Watters, and also knew and heard Garrettson, and many others of our early preachers. I saw and heard Dr. Coke. I was quite intimate with Asbury, and knew the sainted Whatcoat. The first Methodist preacher I heard was William Jessop; the second was the lovely Thornton Flemming. The first Methodist preacher that preached in my father's house was Lewis Chasteen. Under the second sermon, preached there by Thomas Scott, (afterward Judge Scott, of Ohio,) I made up my mind to be a Christian in earnest, and joined the Methodists. In 1793 I was licensed to preach at a quarterly meeting. The late Joshua Wells signed my license. In the latter part of the summer I entered the itinerant work on Berkeley circuit. On the 1st of June, 1794, I attended the first conference at Harrisonburgh, Rockingham county. I was appointed to Clarksburgh circuit, west of the Alleghany Mountains; in the following spring to the Red-

[3] Published in a volume, "Recollections of an Old Itinerant." New York. 1854.

stone circuit. In October, 1793, I attended my first conference in Baltimore. From there I was sent to Kentucky; then to the far West. There was but one conference then west of the Alleghany Mountains, called the Western Conference, and that was small, though spread over a vast territory, namely, Western Virginia, New River, and Holston, and East Tennessee, Cumberland, and Kentucky. In October, 1799, I crossed the Ohio into the northwestern territory, and organized the Scioto circuit. In the spring of 1800 I came to the General Conference in Baltimore; and by my own request was returned to Scioto, my newly-formed circuit. Thence I was returned to Kentucky, and ended my western labors on Nolechucky circuit, Tennessee, March, 1803, having suffered much from bilious fever, ague and fever, dyspepsia, and rheumatism, being then quite a cripple. But being requested by the bishop I set out on horseback, and rode about four or five hundred miles in much pain, and came again to my mother conference. I traveled seven years under the rule that allowed a preacher sixty-four dollars a year, including all marriage fees and presents, from a cravat down to a pair of stockings. I think our bishops were under the same rule. The last time I saw this rule imposed was at the Baltimore Conference, held at the Stone Chapel in May, 1800. In my mind I yet see the sainted Wilson Lee hand over his fees and presents. True, our traveling expenses were allowed if we could get them. The world never saw a more disinterested, cross-bearing, and self-sacrificing set of ministers than the early Methodist preachers. Nothing but a deep and abiding conviction of duty could induce them to volunteer in such a work. In those days the Methodists believed in a special call to the work of the ministry. The notion,

shall I teach or preach, choose the study of law or Gospel, medicine or divinity, did not then prevail; but rather, shall I abandon my calling, whatever it may be, and enter the ministry, when persecutions, hardships, excessive labors, and poverty, and perhaps a premature death in some obscure cabin, stared them in the face. It was necessary to be constrained by the love of Christ and a tender concern for perishing sinners to enter this important work. Yes, some might say, 'A woe is hanging over my head, and I dare not disobey without periling my present future happiness.' But the Church also lost the itinerant labors of many able and worthy ministers for the want of provision for families. I served it (with the exception of a few months) forty-two years; thirty-two years in a single life, for I had not the heart to subject a wife to the privations, poverty, and hardships of those days. For the last twenty-six years I have been on the superannuated list. My claim on the conference funds was two hundred dollars per annum. The deficiency has been near three thousand dollars. But, thank God, although my means are limited, I have not been in real want of any necessary or good thing. I am often sorrowful, yet can always rejoice. I am striving by grace to be a contented and happy old man, waiting patiently in my pilgrim's rest till I shall hear the call, 'Come up to that higher rest prepared for all God's weary pilgrims.'"

He was born in Frederick city, Md., April 23, 1799, and joined the Methodists about his twentieth year. He met soon after Francis M'Cormick, another memorable name, as we shall hereafter see. "I did not hesitate," says Smith, "to tell him seriously my whole and sole object in joining the Church, as he called it.

He professed to be a Universalist, and pleaded for the doctrine. I told him I had tried to believe it, but I found it would not do. I did not believe it was true. 'Well,' said he, 'how do you feel, anyhow?' I said, 'Bad enough,' and tried to tell him my state as well as I could. He took me by the hand, and said, 'Farewell, I expect I shall join too after a while,' and went back into the house. He felt and looked serious, which was noticed by a playful and mischievous fellow, who played a trick on him. This so enraged M'Cormick that he would have thrown the man headforemost into a large fire (for he was a powerful man) if he had not been prevented. Strange to tell, both these men got converted shortly after this. I think it was that day two weeks M'Cormick went to the meeting, was powerfully awakened, joined the society, and that night began to pray in his family. The other was converted at my father's. M'Cormick became a leader of a class, an exhorter, and finally a local preacher, and was a pioneer in the West. In the fall of 1779 I found him on the banks of the Little Miami, opening the way for the traveling preachers. He became my constant companion and true yoke-fellow while I remained at home."

Smith had not yet attained peace of mind, though a Methodist; he was waiting, in much mental distress, for some of those demonstrative experiences which prevailed around him, but of which his calm temperament was not susceptible. "My dear father," he says, "took notice of my distress, and took an opportunity of saying to me, one day when we were alone, 'My son, what is the cause of your trouble of mind?' for he saw the change in my conduct, and had reason to believe that I had experienced a change of heart. I

told him I wanted the Lord to convert my soul. He asked me if I knew what conversion was, and how it was obtained; and explained to me, that a sinner is justified by grace through faith, and through faith alone. While he was preaching faith to me the glorious plan of salvation was opened to my mind; a plan so well suited to my condition. I believed with the heart unto righteousness, and stepped into the liberty of the children of God. My distress gave way, and love and joy flowed into my soul. I believed God was reconciled to me in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Following the custom of the Methodists of that day, be forthwith began to visit the families of his neighborhood, "mostly the poor." "After my day's labor," he writes, "was done, I mounted my horse, and rode three or four miles on such visits. Before my conversion I could not sing a single tune of any kind; but I had now learned by ear a few hymn tunes. Sometimes serious persons would be invited when they knew I was coming. One evening when I was on one of these visits, I found the house nearly full of people. I was much alarmed, and knew not what to do. However, as they all seemed serious, I talked to them, sung and prayed with them, and talked again, and wept over them; and we had a weeping time, and I believe serious impressions were made on the minds of the most of them. Thus, with almost no intention on my part, I was led to exhort, and some time after this a permit was given me to do so."

An exhorter in those days soon became a preacher. Smith's friend, M'Cormick, had now become an ardent Methodist, and went forth with him to hold their first public meeting. It was at "Davenport's meeting-house," in the wilderness of Western Maryland, and was a char-

acteristic scene. "We found," writes Smith, "the lower part of the house full of people, and some in the gallery. There was no light but on the pulpit, and that was high; so we had to ascend the pulpit to see how to read a hymn. It was a trembling time with me, and no better with my companion. I opened the meeting. One poor sinner cried out for mercy under the prayer. I tried to exhort, but was, as I thought, amazingly embarrassed, and sat down in great confusion and distress of mind; for I felt as if I had done more harm than I should ever do good, and prayed to the Lord to forgive my presumption, and I never would do the like again. The poor woman was still crying for mercy. Brother M'Cormick gave a lively exhortation, and seemed to have great liberty, and concluded with singing and prayer. I was still so mortified that I wished to get out of the meeting-house and hide myself. But the people all seemed to be serious, and sat down, and some looked at the woman in distress. Presently Brother M'Cormick began to sing, 'Come on, my partners in distress,' in great spirit, for he was a fine singer, and the soul-melting power of the Lord came down upon us, and it was felt through all the house. My mind was relieved in a moment, and I soon found myself on a bench exhorting the people, and we had a most glorious time. This was a log meeting-house, and I had hauled the first log to it; and this was the first pulpit I ever opened my mouth in."

In 1793 he was licensed to preach, and began his itinerant career on Berkeley circuit, Virginia. In the next year he was received on trial in the conference, and sent beyond the Alleghanies; he thus took his place among the founders of Methodism in the valley of the

Mississippi, where we shall hereafter meet him with his friend M'Cormick, both doing heroic service.

The name of M'Kendree has already appeared in our narrative—compromised with that of O'Kelly, but speedily redeemed. William M'Kendree was destined to be the fourth bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, a chief founder of the denomination in the West, a preacher of transcendent power, an ecclesiastical administrator of scarcely rivaled ability, and a man of the saintliest character.

He was born in King William county, Va., July, 1757, of upright parents, who trained him carefully in the faith of the English Church, then the established religion of the colony. The morals of his youth were nearly perfect; he could remember to have sworn but one profane oath in his life, though the vice was fashionable all around him; but he later discovered, he says, by reading the Holy Scriptures, that his "heart was deceitful and desperately wicked." He was a youth of great sensibility, vivacity, and energy; vigorous in mind and body. He took up arms for the Revolution, served in the army several years, attained the rank of adjutant, and was present at the surrender of Cornwallis. The year 1787 was signalized, as we have seen, by extraordinary religious interest in Virginia, especially on the noted Brunswick circuit; M'Kendree, then thirty years of age, lived on that circuit. Under the ministry of John Easter, famous for his eloquence and usefulness, his conscience was effectually awakened. "My convictions," he says, "were renewed. They were deep and pungent. The great deep of the heart was broken up. Its deceit and desperately wicked nature was disclosed; and the awful, the eternally ruinous consequences, clearly appeared. My repentance was sin-

cere. I became willing, and was desirous to be saved on any terms. After a sore and sorrowful travail of three days, which were employed in hearing Mr. Easter, and in fasting and prayer, while the man of God was showing a large congregation the way of salvation by faith, with a clearness which at once astonished and encouraged me, I ventured my all upon Christ. In a moment my soul was relieved of a burden too heavy to be borne, and joy instantly succeeded sorrow. For a short space of time I was fixed in silent adoration, giving glory to God for his unspeakable goodness to such an unworthy creature."

Still later he studied with grateful interest the Methodist doctrine of sanctification, and sought to realize it in his own spiritual life. "Eventually," he writes, "I obtained deliverance from unholy passions, and found myself possessed of ability to resist temptation, to take up and bear the cross, and to exercise faith and patience, and all the graces of the Spirit, in a manner before unknown to me."

His superior character and abilities soon led his brethren to believe that he should devote himself to the ministry, but his self-distrust shrunk at the suggestion. Easter induced him to accompany him on his circuit; but, after some attempts to preach, he returned home, fearful that he had run before he was called. Philip Cox was appointed to the Mecklenburg circuit, by the next conference, and, at the same session, Easter, who knew M'Kendree's capacities better than his modesty allowed him to estimate them himself, had him received on probation and placed under the care of Cox, though he had not yet been licensed as a local preacher. Cox was a man of flaming zeal and indomitable energy, and bore along his diffident colleague, but the latter pro-

ceeded deliberately. "I went," he says, "immediately to the circuit to which I was appointed, relying more on the judgment of experienced ministers, in whom I confided, than on any clear conviction of my call to the work; and when I yielded to their judgment I firmly resolved not to deceive them, and to retire as soon as I should be convinced that I was not called of God, and to conduct myself in such a manner that, if I failed, my friends might be satisfied it was not for want of effort on my part, but that their judgment was not well founded. This resolution supported me under many doubts and fears—for entering into the work of a traveling preacher neither removed my doubts nor the difficulties that attended my labors. Sustained by a determination to make a full trial, I resorted to fasting and prayer, and waited for those kind friends who had charge and government over me to dismiss me from the work. But I waited in vain. In this state of suspense my reasoning might have terminated in discouraging and ruinous conclusions, had I not been comforted and supported by the kind and encouraging manner in which I was received by aged and experienced brethren, and by the manifest presence of God in our meetings, which were frequently lively and profitable. Sometimes souls were convicted and converted, which afforded me considerable encouragement, as well as the union and communion with my Saviour in private devotion, which he graciously afforded me in the intervals of my very imperfect attempts to preach his gospel. In this way I became satisfied of my call to the ministry, and that I was moving in the line of my duty."

He hardly escaped total discomfiture in this first trial. At one of his appointments, after singing and prayer, he took his text, and attempted to look at his

audience; but such was his embarrassment that he could not lift his eyes from the Bible till he finished his sermon. After the sermon his host, at the appointment, left the house, supposing the preacher would follow him; but not seeing him, he returned to the church, and there found him seated on the lowest step of the pulpit stairs, his face covered with his hands, looking forlorn and dejected, as if he had not a friend on earth. He invited him to go home with him. M'Kendree said, in a mournful tone, "I am not fit to go home with anybody." He accompanied Easter to the conference, still agitated with doubts and anxiety. While alone and profoundly sad in the parlor where he lodged, an aged minister came in, walked up, and took him in his arms. "Brother," he said, "my mind is powerfully impressed that God has a great work for you to do, and I believe the impression is from the Lord. Don't start from the cross—take it up—go to the work, and be faithful!" While pronouncing these words the tears ran down the old man's cheeks, and he left young M'Kendree with his mind greatly moved."[1] The history of the Church through many years has recorded the result.

He made full proof of his ministry, and was successively appointed to Cumberland, Portsmouth, Amelia, and Greensville circuits; to the latter as preacher in charge.

He was long under the powerful influence of O'Kelly, who was his presiding elder. M'Kendree did not know Asbury intimately enough to qualify, in his own mind, the charges made against him by O'Kelly; he yielded to the influence of his popular and ardent presiding elder, and, with Rice Haggardy, sent

[1] Rev. D. Devinne, in Wakeley's "Heroes," p. 101.

in his resignation to Asbury. The indiscretion was brief, however; it does not appear in the Conference Minutes, there being no interruption in his appointments, for at the next conference he was designated to Norfolk and Portsmouth. Regretting his sudden error, he resolved to ascertain, from personal acquaintance, the real character of Asbury, and for this purpose accompanied the bishop in his travels. He became satisfied that O'Kelly had misrepresented him, and resumed his work with a devotion which never again wavered. Before the year had passed Asbury removed him to Petersburg. On his southern tour of 1794 the bishop took him to South Carolina, and appointed him to the Union Circuit; the next year he was back again in Virginia, on Bedford Circuit; but before the year closed he was sent to the Greenbrier Circuit, among the Alleghany Mountains, and thence to the Little Levels, on Kanawha River, the remotest point of the Virginia Conference. "Surely," remarks his biographer, "this was itinerancy in such a manner as would frighten many of his followers in this day; but such was the zeal of the preachers then, that they delighted in the most self-denying labors."[4]

In 1795 his appointment was on Botetourt Circuit, still on the frontier, west of the Blue Ridge, for Asbury had discovered in him the qualifications of a pioneer and founder. He had four circuits under his care, traveling on each of them a quarter of a year. During the remainder of the century he traveled large districts as presiding elder, one of them extending along the Potomac, in Maryland and Virginia, and reaching from the Chesapeake to the Alleghanies. He had now become one of the leading men of the Church. He was near-

[4] Life of M'Kendree, by Rev. B. St. J. Fry. New York: 1851.

six feet high, with a robust frame, weighing about one hundred and sixty pounds, of extraordinary strength and activity, fair complexion, black hair and blue eyes. "When calm and silent, there was the expression of deep thought upon his countenance, sometimes approaching even to that of care; but whenever he spoke, his eyes would kindle up, and a smile, like that of pleasant recognition, would cover his face, which was the outcropping of a kind and benevolent heart."[5]

His intellect was quick and keen, but calm and singularly observant, so that nothing "that came in sight escaped his notice." As a man of order he was almost fastidious; "everything must be in its place, and all things done at the proper time." This precision marked even his apparel; he dressed in the simple Quaker-like garb of his brethren of the ministry, and though made of the homespun stuff of the frontier, it was a model of neatness. An authority who knew him through most of his public life says: "His intellect, as a whole, was bright, and his thoughts diamond pointed. He never said foolish things—never weak, never even common things. There was thought in all his words, and wisdom in all his thoughts. He was the man for the times and the age in which he lived, leading in triumph the Church in the wilderness, like Abraham leading his son to the mount of vision. I shall never see his like again. He was communicative, companionable, and sympathizing. There was no coldness, coarseness, or selfishness about him. Without effort, he found his way to the confidence and esteem of every one, old and young, black and white, rich and poor. His heart was always in the lead, so that a stranger was first impressed with the goodness of the man and the purity of his purpose—

[5] Biog. Sketches, etc., p. 45. Nashville, Tenn.: 1858.

a natural draft upon his confidence which he was sure to honor. This point once gained, his great wisdom never failed to command respect. As a pulpit orator, his excellency consisted mainly in his power of analysis. In this respect, I doubt if I ever heard his superior. He was not wanting in description and pathos. In declamation he did not often indulge, though he had considerable power in that direction; but in argument he was overwhelming. He was perfectly natural and easy, with not much action, unless when greatly excited; and then every gesture spoke. His enunciation was good, his voice fine and full—the lowest tones of it could be heard throughout the congregation; still there was a slight natural defect in his utterance, which consisted in his occasionally hesitating or dwelling upon a word. Yet he managed this defect so handsomely that it became an ornament, from the fact that he rested or made his swell on the most important word in the sentence, so that it had the effect of a well-directed emphasis. His sermons were generally short, particularly in the last years of his ministry, and gave evidence of being greatly condensed. His public prayers were simple, comprehensive, and brief, while they seemed to be the very essence of humility and breath of devotion."[6]

Asbury judged him fit to be the leader of the western itinerancy. He passed into the valley of the Mississippi, where a grand career awaited him. He here had charge of the Western Conference, comprehending Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, (west of New River,) and a circuit in Illinois. We shall meet him often hereafter, and find him at last worthily at the head of the American Methodist hosts.

Enoch George had also now become an effective

[6] Rev. Dr. Green, in "Biographical Sketches," etc.

evangelist, destined, like M'Kendree, to lead his brethren as a bishop. He was born in 1767 or 1768, in Lancaster County, Va.[7] He was trained in the English Church of the province, but was addicted to the prevalent irreligion and dissipation of his neighborhood. Moving into Dinwiddie and Brunswick counties, he came under the ministry of Jarratt, who, he says, "would thunder at sinners of any and every description, many of whom would fly from his warning voice as from a house in flames; and even in their flight he would 'cry aloud and spare not.' He was made the instrument of turning many to righteousness, who experienced the humility, faith, hope, and charity of the Gospel, witnessing a good confession in life and death. He united 'them that believed,' and were of one heart, into classes, as our Wesley had done in England, and met them regularly; and such as he could not attend to, he gave up to the Methodist preachers, that they might be guided by their counsel, and afterward received into glory. He looked upon the world as his parish; and though his appointed sphere of labor was the parish of Bath, Dinwiddie County, yet duty prompted him to labor in the adjoining parishes, in 'the highway and hedges, calling sinners to repentance.' Under the ministry of this 'servant of the most high God,' I received my first religious impressions. Until this time, I and many of his parishioners were as ignorant of the plan of salvation, by faith in Jesus Christ, as though we had never heard the gospel." Removing to another locality, he says: "We had no religious services, either in my father's family, or in any that I visited. Our time was whiled away in fiddling and dancing. But,

[7] Minutes 1829. He remarks, himself, that though Lancaster county is the first locality he can recollect, he is not certain of the time or place of his birth, owing to the epidemic spirit of emigration which kept his father unsettled during his childhood. Meth. Quart. Rev. 1830.

independently of any convictions received in the church or elsewhere, I remember the visits of the Spirit of God, enlightening, melting, and alarming me. I continued in this situation for many months and only wanted suitable direction and encouragement. With these I should soon have found the pearl of great price. None of my acquaintance appeared to have any serious impressions, or if they had they were concealed, as my own were. At this time we heard that a certain Methodist preacher was traveling through a part of our parish and county, under whose labors hundreds were 'falling down,' and crying, 'Sir, what must we do to be saved?' They 'repented, believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and were converted.' By these reports my 'foolish heart' was hardened and 'darkened.' It was my delight to invent satirical epithets for these men, by which I and my companions were amused. In this way I continued to resist God, having founded my opinion on common report, until my father and stepmother were among the hearers of that venerable, holy, and useful minister, known to thousands in the south of Virginia, John Easter."

Easter was one of the "sons of thunder" in the early itinerancy. A contemporary preacher says: "John Easter, traveling Brunswick circuit, held a meeting at Mabey's Chapel, near a village called Hicksford, at which there was a great concourse of people, and while he was preaching several hundred persons fell flat upon the ground, struck down by the mighty power of God, and many of them were powerfully converted. The effects of that revival were exceedingly great, so much so, that the wretched sellers of alcohol lost nearly all their customers in the village. John Easter was an extraordinary man with regard to his faith and power in preaching the gospel of salvation. Like Jacob, he

had power with God, and with men. When he preached or exhorted, great power fell upon the people, and many sinners were slain by the sword of the Spirit."[8] Such was the man whom George met. "When Mr. Easter spoke," he continues, "his word was clothed with power, and the astonished multitude trembled, and many fell down and cried aloud. Some fell near me, and one almost on me; and when I attempted to fly, I found myself unable. When my consternation subsided, I collected all my strength and resolution, and left my friends and the family, determining never to be seen at a Methodist meeting again. In this I was defeated. My father and his family, with many of my friends, remained in the assembly, while I 'fled from the presence of the Lord;' and they determined to seek and taste the heavenly gift, and be made partakers of the 'Holy Ghost.' On the next day there was to be another meeting in our vicinity, and as the people passed our house, one and another said to me, 'Come, and let us go up to the house of the Lord,' and hear this awful messenger of truth. I replied to their entreaties and inquiries by surly negatives; but my father interposed his authority, and commanded my attendance. I went, intending to steel my heart against conviction. However, it pleased God on this day 'to open my eyes, and turn me from darkness to light,' by the ministry of the word; and I was willing to become a Christian in 'the way of the Lord.' Day and night I cried for mercy. In this disconsolate state I wandered from meeting to meeting, and from valley to valley, 'seeking rest, finding none,' and almost ready to yield to despair, yet resolved never to renounce my hope of mercy, while it was written, 'The Lord will provide,' and 'His mercy

[8] Rev. J. Patterson, in North Carolina Chr. Adv., June, 1857.

endureth forever.' On one Sabbath, while thus 'tossed with tempests, and not comforted,' after meeting I retired to the woods, 'and there I received forgiveness of sins, by faith that is in Jesus Christ,' and the witness of his Spirit with mine. Then I tasted that the Lord is gracious; felt grace in my heart—God in man—heaven upon earth. I was in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and all around me, each shrub, each flower, each leaf, spoke the praises of the Father, who 'made them all.' From that day until now I have never doubted my conversion to Christ, and adoption into his family. Shortly after my conversion I joined the Methodist society, 'choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin,' and resolved, through the grace of God, to be 'faithful unto death.' I had everything to learn in the science of salvation. My leader 'was a faithful man, and feared God above many.' He was well qualified to take heed unto the flock of Christ. One instance of my leader's faithfulness to me I will mention. My father having some business of importance for me to transact, under his direction, soon after I joined the society, I was detained from class meeting; and when I had accomplished the work given me to do, my mind had become so careless that I would stay away whenever an opportunity offered. The leader, who had noticed my remissness, said nothing to me on the subject in the class-room; but when the meeting had concluded, he took me out, and told me of my fault between him and me alone, dealing with me tenderly, but faithfully and effectually; for, from that time, as long as I was a member of a class, I never voluntarily neglected this means of grace. I pray God to give us universally such leaders. Immediately after my conversion, with the consent of my father and

mother, I erected a family altar, and 'called upon the name of the Lord' in our house. Though I wept and trembled under it, I endured the cross, being satisfied with the constant conviction that it was my duty. After this, for some time, I prayed in families that desired it, and assisted my teacher in prayer meetings at the school. Soon my burden was increased, for my assistance was demanded in the public prayer meetings, and I thought it better for me to stay away, than injure so good a cause by my feeble performances."

His brethren encouraged him, however, and warned him that it was his duty to "exhort" the people. "The circuit preacher," he continues, "having appointed a watch-night, they induced him to call on me for a 'word of exhortation.' Of this I was aware before the meeting began, and by going late, and hiding myself, I hoped to escape. In this fancied concealment I sat and listened to the sermon, which was no sooner concluded than the preacher called for me by name. This so affrighted me that I sat down upon the floor; but he continued calling, until an acquaintance answered that I was there, and a friend led me to the table, where, with trembling and weeping, I exhorted. This was the beginning of my ministry."

Philip Cox called him out upon a circuit. We have already witnessed his introduction to Asbury by Cox; the bishop sent him with a letter to a preacher who was breaking up the fallow ground and forming a circuit, at the head waters of the Catawba and Broad Rivers, in North Carolina, three hundred miles distant. "I was astonished and staggered," says George, "at the prospect of this work, but resorted to my tried friend, Cox, who animated me with his advice and directions; and I set off with his benedictions, and the blessing of

the Lord." "Thus," he says, "I began my itinerancy," and thus, the Church should be continually reminded, its greatest historic men in America, if not in Europe, began their ministerial careers. It was a necessity of their times; circumstances and their Bibles educated them, and made them "masters in Israel." Asbury knew that, if anything could be made of the "beardless boy" presented to him by Cox, the heroic work of the frontier would make him. He was thus made an evangelic giant, and a worthy successor of the bishop.

He was severely tested in his remote field—a "vast tract of country, among the most stupendous mountains of North America." He was diffident, and easily discouraged. He thought of escaping home, but had not money enough for the expenses of the journey; he engaged in a school as teacher, to earn the necessary funds, but was defeated. "In addition," he writes, "my clothes were almost worn out, and my money was expended, so that I could not go home with any credit. These things urged me on. I saw the snare into which I had well nigh fallen, and abhorred the idea of relinquishing my post dishonorably. In this state of things I continued my course, wondering how the people could bear with my weakness, and adoring the Lord, who 'comforted me with the exceeding comfort of the Holy Ghost,' and poured out his Spirit upon those to whom I ministered, causing his work to prosper in my hands. Methodism in the circuit had to press through crowds of opposers, but God made his word 'like mighty winds or torrents fierce.' Finding that my gifts and acquirements, as I thought, were not adapted to the class of people among whom I labored, I wrote to Bishop Asbury, desiring him to remove me. To this he replied in a pleasant and affectionate manner, saying, 'It was

good for me, and all others, to bear the yoke in youth; that itinerant labors must be hard if properly performed; and that it was better to become inured to poverty and pain, hunger and cold, in the days of my youth; that when I was old and gray-headed the task would be easy.' This reasoning satisfied me, and since then I have submitted to my appointments cheerfully."

It was in 1789 that Cox called him out; in 1790 he was admitted to the Conference on trial and sent to Pamlico Circuit, North Carolina; in 1791 to Caswell, where he had great success; but, in accordance with the "itinerancy" of the times, he was soon dispatched again to Pamlico circuit, "embracing as sickly a region as any in North Carolina." "This sudden transition," he says, "from the foot of the Black Mountain to the margin of the sea, tried my faith. Thus I was made partaker in the afflictions of my brethren."

We trace him further to Roanoke and back again to Caswell, where he was associated with "the good and great Henry Hill, who had been intended for the bar, and had nearly completed his professional education, when God laid in his claim, and sent him to call sinners to repentance, and perfect his saints. He was a star in God's right hand, to illuminate the Churches. In season, out of season, to all men, of all ranks, he diffused the light and influence of evangelical truth. It was my privilege to spend one year with him, and it proved the happiest I ever enjoyed. The zeal of the Lord's house animated his heart, and in every society a flame was kindled which 'many waters could not quench.'"

In 1792 he traveled Gifford County, North Carolina, where "it pleased the great Head of the Church to revive his work gloriously." He attended the General Conference of 1792, and witnessed afterward the schism

of O'Kelly, as it desolated the neighborhood of his "relatives in Virginia, many of whom joined him." "I had sorrow upon sorrow," he writes. The secession spread into his North Carolina field, and required his utmost wisdom. In 1793 Asbury called, in a North Carolina Conference, for preachers for the further south, but they vesitated. "I was grieved," writes George, "to think he preachers so limited in their views that none would ffer to go from North to South Carolina. I consulted ı ıy special friends on the propriety of my offering to go ıf others would not; they labored to dissuade me from ıt, yet my purpose was fixed to go, if no senior preacher volunteered. When the conference was about closing, Asbury complained of the local views of the preachers, and I tremblingly said, 'Here am I; send me.' We set off, and when the expenses were paid, nothing was left. I had only time to travel from Virginia and North Carolina, the scenes of O'Kelly's division, to South Carolina, to meet with another schism of the same spirit, carried on with the same epithets; but Hammet and his party disappeared in a few years."

He was rapidly tossed about the vast field: in 1794 to the Great Pee Dee Circuit; in 1795 to Edisto, and the same year he was three months in Charleston. Of these years he says: "My labors were of the most painful kind; in a desert land, among almost impassable swamps, and under bilious diseases of every class, which unfitted me for duty in Charleston, or among the hospitable inhabitants of the 'Pine Barrens.' In the midst of all this my mind was stayed upon God, and kept in perfect peace. Prospects in general were discouraging. At the second conference of my laboring in this region, Bishop Asbury inquired whether we knew of the conversion of any souls within the bounds of the conference during the

year; and to the best of my recollection the whole of us together could not remember one! At this Conference [1794] nearly all the men of age, experience, and talents located. I was appointed a presiding elder, and besought the preachers and people to unite 'as one man,' and seek by fasting and prayer a revival of th work of the Lord in the midst of the years of declension and spiritual death. The Lord heard, and the 'displays of his power and glory' were so manifest that nearly two thousand members were added to the district in a few months. I will here mention a circumstance which explains in some measure the nature of itinerant operations. At the conference just spoken of, Mr. Asbury was much concerned for the Church, and inquired how many preachers were going to the ensuing General Conference. In those days all who wished could attend. He ascertained that nearly all expected to go. He then said to me, with apparent anguish and great emphasis, 'You must stay on the district, and keep house.' This was a painful injunction, as I had been from home several years; but I intended to submit. When the revival commenced, all the preachers except one declined going, and he said he would stay unless I went. We two set off to represent South Carolina. When I met the bishop and offered an apology, he smiled and retired. From this I hoped he would not object to my continuing in the northern states, as it was evident a southern climate would ruin my constitution. But when I made known my wishes, he refused to grant them. I made a second application through his traveling companion, Henry Hill, but with no better success. Finding I must return, I submitted, and started with appointments for Dr. Coke, from Richmond, Va., to Charleston, S. C. Having accomplished this, I returned and met the doc-

tor, nearly two hundred miles from Charleston, and traveled with him into the city. In him I found excellences not common to man. His true Christian courtesy taught him to treat the poor with respect, and to show the same care for the souls of the poor slaves as for those of their rich masters. In Charleston we held our conference. I understood from Bishop Asbury that I was appointed for Georgia. This was another trial, as my late district was in peace and prosperity, while Georgia was full of contention and strife. In this case remonstrance would have been as fruitless as in the other. I prayed for grace to bear the cross, and entered upon my duties. After all my 'fear and trembling,' my religious enjoyments in that year have not been surpassed in any year of my itinerancy. Religion revived in almost every part of the district. The prosperity of the work and my appointment were the 'Lord's doings, and marvelous in our eyes.' But this ended my labors in the South Carolina Conference. My exertions were so great in this day of visitation that I injured a blood vessel, which, with my old companion, the bilious fever, brought me near to the gates of death. I wrote to the bishop, who directed me to come on to the north. I did so as expeditiously as my disease would allow, and meeting the Virginia Conference, was appointed for Brunswick Circuit. When I ascertained the labor required I declined entering it, and after a few months' rest, accompanied Mr. Asbury to New York; but he, finding my health still inadequate to the labor, gave me a further respite, and advised me to visit the Warm Springs in Berkeley County, Va. I did so; but finding no relief, I went to the Sulphur Springs near Newtown, Frederick County. Here I obtained relief from the spasms in my side, and lest I should be burdensome to

my friends, I opened a school, the profits of which paid my board, and secured a little money to help me on to the Virginia Conference. Finding my strength still insufficient for the duties of the itinerancy, I asked for and obtained a location, being determined never to burden the cause I could not assist."

He resumed his itinerant labors in 1799 with restored health and increased zeal, and thenceforward, with a single intermission, we shall see him passing through the denomination like "a flame of fire" for nearly thirty years, when he fell triumphantly in death in the highest office of the ministry.

Like M'Kendree, he was large in stature, nearly six feet high, stout, with a tendency to corpulence, and full of energy; with a military erectness while standing, inclining forward when moving, with his hands usually thrown behind him, and habitually quick in his motions. His form was imposing by its expression of strength, his face broad, forehead prominent and expanded, nose large, eyes blue and deeply set, eyebrows dark and projecting, hair black, tinged with gray, and carelessly but gracefully hanging about his neck; his complexion sallow, the effect of his sufferings from the miasma of the South. His whole person, in fine, was stamped with character. His intellect was clear and sure, if not brilliant; calm, though always energetic; quiet energy pervaded all his acts and words. "He thought rapidly, spoke fluently, decided promptly, and permitted nothing in which he was engaged to hang heavily upon his hands. He detested tardiness, as the murderer of time, and never failed to signify his disapprobation of a dull and languid course of proceeding in the transaction of business, or of unimportant discussions calculated to retard its progress. Wherever he

was, everything with which he had any connection was destined to feel the impulse of his propelling energies." But it was in his religious life that his characteristics shone most conspicuously. His piety was profound and tender, and glowed till he seemed at times incandescent with divine light. He was among the most effective preachers of his day. An extraordinary pathos melted his audiences and himself, and he often had to pause in his sermons and ask his hearers to join him in utterances of thanksgiving, while, with tears streaming down his weather-worn face, he would raise his spectacles, and, with uplifted eyes and hands, offer praise to God, bearing aloft his thronged congregations, thrilled, weeping, and adoring. The elder Methodists throughout the country still recall him with veneration as the "weeping prophet" of their episcopacy.

Few if any names of Methodist evangelists were more venerated in the South toward the end of the last and the beginning of the present centuries than that of Hope Hull. A man of sterling abilities and character, his influence became general. A singularly persuasive eloquence, of which tradition in both New England and the extreme South still speaks with wonder, made him one of the chief among the many eloquent itinerants of those days; and great purity and firmness of character, and soundness and largeness of mind, combined with dignity and simplicity of manners, secured him more than popularity, universal respect and confidence. He was born on the Eastern Shore of Maryland in 1763, joined the Methodists in Baltimore in his youth, and was received into the Baltimore Conference in 1785, and sent to Salisbury Circuit, N. C. His rare talents gave him immediate success, and for two years he was one of the principal founders of the Church in North

and South Carolina and Georgia. The unfortunate Beverly Allen had been sent to Georgia as early as 1785, but he formed few if any societies in his first labors there. John Major and Thomas Humphries reached the colony the next year and effectively founded Churches in Burke County, and penetrated as far west as Washington, in Wilkes County. Hull was sent to Washington in 1788, the first time that the name of the circuit appears in the Minutes. He is therefore supposed to be the founder of Methodism in that region. "He was in many places the first Methodist preacher the people ever saw, and to many individuals the first preacher of any denomination. It was chiefly through his exertions that the first respectable brick building was erected in Washington, designed to be used as an academy."[9]

He was later appointed to introduce Methodism into Savannah, where he labored energetically, but found insuperable prejudices against the memory of Wesley, whose residence there had not been forgotten. The proceedings of the American Conferences on slavery were also known in the city, and cited against the denomination with fierce hostility. Hull was violently persecuted, and menaced by mobs. He took refuge on Burke Circuit, where he labored with better success. He was singularly effective in prayer, and anecdotes are told of the sick and the apparently dying being suddenly restored under his supplications. He sometimes used this power very boldly. On his way to one of his appointments he was invited, as a traveler, into a house where a ball was being held. "He entered, and when, soon after, he was requested to dance, he took the floor, and remarked aloud, 'I never engage in any kind

[9] MS. of his son, Dr. Hull, cited in Sprague's Annals, p. 113.

of business without first asking the blessing of God upon it, so let us pray.' Quick as thought the preacher was on his knees praying in the most earnest manner for the souls of the people, that God would open their eyes to see their sin and danger, and convert them from the error of their ways. All present were amazed and overwhelmed; many fled in terror from the house; while others, feeling the power of God in their midst, began to plead for mercy and forgiveness. After the prayer he said, 'On to-day four weeks I expect to preach at this house,' and quietly retired. On the appointed day the inhabitants for miles around were assembled, and heard one of the most eloquent and powerful sermons that ever fell on human ears. From the work begun in the ball-room a most powerful revival of religion extended in every direction, and many were added to the Church."

Asbury sent him to New England, where he effectively co-operated for a year with Lee and his little band. In 1793 he was back again, laying siege to Savannah, and traveling the Savannah Circuit. In 1794 he was Asbury's traveling companion, sharing the adventurons toils of the bishop in many a hard field. Toward the close of our present period his health and domestic circumstances compelled him to locate; but the location of Methodist preachers in that day was more a limitation than a cessation of their itinerancy; they preached usually more, every week, than regular Methodist preachers in modern times, and their labors extended through all the region round about their homes, twenty, thirty, or more miles. Hope Hull, though brought up a mechanic, had too large and thoughtful a mind not to appreciate the importance of education. He had educated himself on his circuits, studying not

only his own, but the Latin language and literature. His observation of the opening country convinced him that, next to Christianity, education was the great requisite of the times; that the evident future of the young nation rendered this want imperative. He saw that Methodism was laying the moral foundations of much of the republic, but he saw also that the Church should rear on these foundations structures, fortifications of education. He threw himself therefore back upon one of his remote early circuits in Wilkes County, Ga., and with the advice of Asbury, opened an academy. He only changed his field and plan of labor. "At a time when scarcely any one who was qualified would submit to the drudgery of teaching, he commenced a school composed of pupils of both sexes, and of all ages from infancy to manhood, and thus he divided his time between teaching and preaching."

The children of many Methodist families, and some Methodist preachers, were trained under his roof. Still later he moved to Athens, Ga., and helped to found the state university there, the first building of which had not yet been completed. He became the most active member of its Board of Trustees, and continued such till his death. Perhaps no man did more for the prosperity of that institution. A part of the time he was its acting president. Meanwhile he was a powerful and renowned preacher, a standard-bearer of his denomination in Georgia. His "whole life was emphatically spent in doing good. He was a man of great muscular strength and physical courage, and was restless if not occupied. His health was not robust, and for several years before his death it was often interrupted by disorders of the digestive organs. He totally abstained from the use of wine and spirituous liquors when the

whole current of fashion and example moved in the opposite direction."

A veteran southern Methodist preacher,[10] who intimately knew him, says: "To help rescue the name of Hope Hull from oblivion I feel to be a reasonable and holy duty. Indeed I have long felt that there is an undischarged obligation resting upon our Church in regard to the ministerial character of this eminent man He was among the pioneers of Methodism in Georgia, and in the vigor of his manhood, both as to his physical and mental prowess, his fame was almost world-wide. I well remember that, in the days of my youth, he used to be known under the coarse but graphic appellation of the 'Broadax,' an honorary distinction conferred on him because of the mighty power that attended his ministry. My eyes first fell on him as he sat near the pulpit of a small log chapel called 'Hull's Meeting-house,' in Clarke County, near Athens. It was a memorable day in my own history. I had longed to see, and now I feared to meet him. It was my second year in the ministry, and, above all, my fear of criticism made his presence dreadful to me. The wonderful reports which had reached me made me look upon him rather as an august than a fatherly being, and, when I saw him, there was nothing in the appearance of the *real* to relieve my mind of the dread of the *ideal* man. His head was rather above the medium size, his hair curling, just sprinkled with gray, and each lock looking as if living under a self-willed government. His face was an exceedingly fine one; he had a well developed forehead, a small, keen blue eye, with a heavy brow, indicative of intense thought. His shoulders were unusually broad and square, his chest wide,

[10] Rev. Dr. Lovick Pierce.

affording ample room for his lungs, a circumstance of great value to a speaker, who drew so freely on his deep, strong voice; his body was unusually long and large in proportion to his lower limbs, his hair originally black, and his voice full, flexible, and capable of every variety of intonation, from the softest sounds of sympathy and persuasion to the thunder tones of wrath. Many ignorant sinners charged him with having learned their secrets, and of using the pulpit to gratify himself in their exposure; and when convinced of their mistake, have doubted whether he were not a prophet. His oratory was natural, his action being the unaffected expression of his inmost mind. Not only was there an entire freedom from everything like mannerism, but there was great harmony between his gesticulation and the expression of his countenance. He seemed, in some of his finest moods of thought, to look his words into you. He was one of nature's orators. In many of his masterly efforts his words rushed upon his audience like an avalanche, and multitudes seemed to be carried before him like the yielding captives of a stormed castle. I was very intimate with him for about ten years; stayed in his house, and talked and prayed and praised with him. At that time he was a local, I an itinerant, preacher; but often did he leave home and business and travel with me for days. Together we preached; nor did Jonathan and David love each other more. All my intimacy with him only served to multiply evidences of his exalted worth. Grave and guarded as he was, there were moments when he entertained his friends with the recital of thrilling incidents in his history connected with the more rustic forms of society with which he had been conversant. There was in many of his impromptu remarks the appearance of almost prophetic apposite-

ness. When he was a circuit missionary, sixty years ago, after preaching one day, he proceeded to meet the little class, and having gone through the names of the class paper, he approached an elderly man sitting afar off, and inquired after his soul's welfare. The old gentleman, after taking sufficient time to digest his answer, said, 'I am like old Paul, when I would do good, evil is present with me.' To which Mr. Hull replied, 'I am afraid you are like old Noah too, get drunk sometimes.' It was a center shot, for the poor old man was a drunkard. Many such cutting remarks, made in utter ignorance of the persons to whom they were addressed, went to prove that he possessed a power of discerning spirits above most other men." He survived till 1818, when he died, saying, "God has laid me under marching orders, and I am ready to obey."

The two brothers, Coleman and Simon Carlisle, were successful evangelists of the South. The former joined the itinerancy in 1792, and was sent to Broad River Circuit; in 1793, to Tar River; 1794, Broad River. At the end of this year he located; but in 1801 he rejoined the Conference, and was sent to Broad River; in 1802, to Saluda; in 1803, to Sandy River. This year, compelled by domestic necessities, he again located; but he loved the itinerancy, and whenever he could leave his helpless family to travel he did so. In 1819 he again joined the Conference, and was appointed to Bush River Circuit. In the latter part of 1823 he "finally located, not from choice, but from absolute necessity." "He was," says one of his ministerial contemporaries, "a poor man, with a sickly, though truly good and excellent wife, and quite a number of little boys and girls. I have known him, after returning home from preaching several miles distant, after supper, take the same horse

(having but one) and plow with him by moonlight until nearly midnight, and then go off next morning to his appointments. He neither owned nor hired servants. O tell me not of the hardships of our itinerant brethren in the present day! In Carlisle's time there was no provision made for 'family expenses.' Every married preacher had to buy his corn and meat out of the small pittance of his disciplinary allowance, which, small as it was, was very frequently not received. In such cases the poor itinerant had to raise his bread and meat, and make a little, to school his children, by hard and incessant labors, with anxious watching thereunto. He was a very popular preacher, and when local, he would be sent for far and near to preach funeral sermons; and what is strange, passing strange, if for his long rides and good sermons he ever received a present to the amount of a picayune I know not. He was a man of strong passions, by nature quite irritable, and his peculiar temperament was a matter of deep regret to him. Hence he used to say to me, that he believed an ounce of grace would go further with some than a pound would with others. But he was deeply pious, conscientious in his attention to closet and family worship, and by grace was enabled to subdue his natural passions, and to keep them in proper bounds. I never knew him thrown off his hinges in the pulpit but once. While preaching a woman sat right before him with a child, which kept up a constant squalling; about midway of his sermon he said, 'Do, sister, take that child out,' and down he sat, not rising again to finish his sermon. He was in general quite social and agreeable with all around him. He was in particular a great favorite with the young. To myself he was a father, brother, and sincere friend. I hope never to forget

him. Carlisle lived to a good old age, 'and he died,' when, where, or how, some of his children and near neighbors may know; but, alas! the Church at large in South Carolina knows it not. Yet he was among the pioneers of Southern Methodism. He endured hardships as a good soldier of Christ. He often hungered and thirsted. He labored, working with his own hands: being reviled, he reviled not again; being persecuted, he suffered it; being defamed, he entreated. He endeavored, as far as in him lay, to preach Christ crucified to rich and poor, to white and colored, to young and old. The day of judgment will tell of many who were brought home to God and to glory through his instrumentality. Peace to his remains wherever they may lie!"[11]

It is a grateful privilege to rescue from oblivion the names of such laborers and sufferers for the Church, however sad may be our sense of the inadequacy of their record.

His brother, Simon Carlisle, preceded him in the ministry by two years, endured also the severest hardships of the itinerancy, and an additional and extraordinary trial, from which, however, he had at last one of those providential vindications which so often occur in the annals of English and American Methodism, and which may well inspire with hope all innocent sufferers. After having labored with humble but intrepid devotion on some of the hardest fields of the South, he was arrested before the Church, and expelled in 1794, and his name appears in the Minutes of that year branded with reproach as a fallen and outcast man. No affliction, no martyrdom could have been more appalling to a faithful Methodist preacher of those days of ministerial

[11] Autobiography of Rev. J. Travis, p. 200. Nashville: 1856.

chivalry. The charge alleged against him was such as, if possible, to enhance the bitterness of his grief, by combining meanness with guilt, for it was theft! For two years the guiltless man bore, with bowed head, this great, and to him mysterious, sorrow; but his faith failed not. He had given offense by reproving a disturbance in one of his rude frontier congregations; under the provocation a young man went to his stopping place, placed a pistol in his saddle-bags, and the next day got out a search-warrant for him, making oath that he believed Carlisle had stolen his weapon. An officer hastened after him on his circuit, overtook him, and charged him with the crime. The astonished preacher, conscious of innocence, readily consented to have his saddle-bags searched. The pistol was found in them; he was thunderstruck; he knew not what to do, but calmly gave himself up to the officer. He was found guilty, and had no way to clear himself. Even the Church threw him off; but the criminal young man was cast on his death-bed. About an hour before he expired he frantically cried out, "I cannot die, I cannot die until I reveal one thing. Mr. Carlisle never stole that pistol; I myself put it in his saddle bags." He then became calm, and so passed into eternity. Carlisle was restored to the ministry, and died in it with peace in 1838.

Such are a few of the "giants of those days" in the more southern field of Methodism. There were many similar men associated with them, whom we have heretofore noticed, of some of whom we have no adequate records, and others who will more appropriately come before us in other sections of the ecclesiastical field to which the later and larger portion of their lives was devoted.

Stephen G. Roszel was now a young itinerant in Virginia, but rising continually in public influence by his flaming zeal and strong talents. For more than fifty years he was to be a chieftain of the Church in Virginia and Maryland, conspicuous as a presiding elder, an able debater in the General Conference, a leader in annual conferences, a revivalist in the pulpit preaching often with great power through an hour and a half or two hours; "a man of mark, exerting a wide and powerful influence in his denomination."[11] "He had," says one of his friends, "a ready command of thought and language, and as a debater had very few superiors. He never quailed before an opponent, and was never prevented by considerations of delicacy from saying anything that would tend to his discomfiture. He possessed the most indomitable perseverance; whatever object he might have in view he pursued it with untiring zeal, and subordinated every agency within his reach to its accomplishment. His commanding qualities as a debater gave him great influence on the floor of the General Conference, and there were few men of his day who had an eye and a hand more constantly or more effectively on the great interests of the Church than he. He was a large, portly man, and had a face indicative of the character which I have attributed to him."[12]

He was a member of every delegated General Conference from the first session till his death. His Conference commemorates him in its Minutes "as a man possessing singular courage, fortitude, constancy, and benevolence. As a preacher he was bold and uncompromising in declaring the whole counsel of God.

[11] Rev. John Coleman, of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Sprague's Annals, p. 180.

[12] Dr. Bangs, ibid., 180.

Blessed with a strong mind, a ready elocution, and great physical power, he was well qualified to do the work of a Methodist traveling preacher."[13] He lived till 1841, when "he passed calmly and confidently, with the high and holy bearing of a Christian hero, to the final conflict, and when the hour had arrived for his departure, (speech having failed, but reason still remaining,) on being interrogated by one of his sons as to his prospect of entering into rest, he raised his hand, gave the sign, and passed to the bosom of his God."

Joshua Wells was also abroad in the southern field at this period, in the full vigor of his young manhood. An able and successful laborer, and regarded by the Church with peculiar reverence through a singularly long life, he was nevertheless so modest, if not morbidly self-diffident, as scarcely ever to have spoken or written anything respecting himself. He was born in Baltimore County in 1764, joined the itinerancy when twenty-five years of age, and died more than ninety-seven years old. He had traveled and preached in Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts as far as Boston. He became at last the oldest living preacher whose name was on the roll of the itinerancy. He was dignified and robust in person, his features strongly marked, and yet benignant. His sermons were noted for their perspicuity and brevity, their masculine sense, clear and vigorous argumentation, and effect. He was distinguished as a disciplinarian. The only allusion to his life from his own pen which I have discovered is in the following sentences: "On the ninth of September, 1781, I believe God in mercy pardoned my sins, and converted my soul. From that time I have been striving to serve the Lord,

[13] Minutes, 1841.

to be useful to my fellow-men, and to stand prepared to meet death triumphantly. In June, 1789, I commenced my itinerant labors, in which I traveled and suffered much; but have been encouraged by these and similar words: 'As thy day is, so shall thy strength be.'" [14]

Philip Bruce was energetically spreading out the denomination during these years on vast districts, as presiding elder, from Northern Virginia to Charlestown, N. C., and to Western Georgia; Nelson Reed was traversing large districts in Maryland and Virginia; Tobias Gibson in the Carolinas, and Valentine Cook and John Cole in the wilds of Virginia, were preparing, by the discipline of severest labor and hardship, for their great achievements in the new regions beyond the mountains, whither John Kobler, Barnabas M'Henry, Daniel Hitt, and other mighty men, had lately advanced from the same southern preparatory field. Thomas Scott, a memorable name in the West, was also there preparing for the same pioneer service, meanwhile leading into the Church, in Virginia, Edward Tiffin, afterward first governor of Ohio, a zealous preacher, and a founder, with Scott, of Methodism in the Northwestern territory. Pickering, Bostwick, and other worthies were preparing for similar expeditions to New England, the latter also destined to bear part in the trans-Alleghany triumphs of the Church. In short, southern Methodism, at this early period, presented a surprising array of strong men, men who have impressed their names on the history of both the South and West, and who deserve to live forever in the grateful memory of the American people, as the standard-bearers of Christian civilization along most of the southern and western frontier.

The Church had greatly extended in the South since

[14] Letter of D. Creamer, Esq., of Baltimore, to the author.

the General Conference; no less than fourteen new circuits had been formed, reaching to the heart of Georgia, and into the Western mountains, across which not a few preachers were penetrating into the wilds of Kentucky and Tennessee. By the end of this period there were in Maryland 12,416 Methodists; in Virginia, 13,779; in North Carolina, 8,713; South Carolina, 3,659; Georgia, 1,174; aggregating nearly 40,000 south of Delaware, exclusive of Kentucky and Tennessee.[15] They amounted to considerably more than twice as many as were reported from all the rest of the denomination.

[15] Inclusive, however, of members west of the mountains, but within states lying chiefly east of them.

CHAPTER IV.

METHODISM IN THE MIDDLE AND NORTHERN STATES, 1792–1796.

Asbury Itinerating in the Middle and Northern States — His Excessive Labors — His Morbid Temperament — On the Northern Frontier — Garrettson — Governor Van Cortlandt — Further Travels — Paucity of his Journals.

On his return from the South and West in 1793 Asbury entered New Jersey early in July, pressed forward in haste, and was holding a conference at Albany in the third week of the month. "We had," he writes, "a melting season among the preachers. Great changes will be made among them from this conference: some will be sent to New Jersey, others to Rhode Island and Massachusetts. The people of Albany roll in wealth. They have no heart to invite any of the servants of God to their houses; unless a great change should take place we shall have no more conferences here. I am tired down with fatigue, and labor under great weakness of body; yet I must haste to Lynn, it may be, to meet trouble. But my days will be short. We hope two hundred souls have been awakened, and as many converted, in Albany District the past year. Our friends are happy here, not being distressed with divisions in the Church, nor by war with the Indians, as they are to the southward."

By the 22d he was in New England, where he spent a month. On the 22d of August he was in New York city, remarking that "Great afflictions prevail here. It is very sickly also in Philadelphia. I have found, by

secret search, that I have not preached sanctification as I should have done. If I am restored this shall be my theme more pointedly than ever, God being my helper. I have been sick upward of four months, during which time I have attended to my business, and ridden, I suppose, not less than three thousand miles. The effects of this weather were sensibly felt by every member of Conference, some of whom were so indisposed that they could not attend. We made a collection of forty pounds for the relief of the preachers on the frontiers of New York and Connecticut. We have awful accounts from Philadelphia, which made me feel too much like a man, and too little like a Christian; we nevertheless went forward to confront the pestilence. Friday, September 6, we rode to that city. Ah, how the ways mourn! how low-spirited are the people while making their escape! I found it awful indeed. I judge the people die from fifty to one hundred in a day. Some of our friends are dying, others flying. Sunday, 8, I preached on Isa. lviii, 1: 'Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins.' The people of this city are alarmed, and well they may be. I went down to Ebenezer, (a church in the lower part of the city,) but my strength was gone; however I endeavored to open and apply Micah vi, 9. The streets are now depopulated, and the city wears a gloomy aspect. All night long my ears and heart were wounded with the cry of fire! O how awful! And what made it still more serious, two young men were killed by the fall of a wall; one of them was a valuable member of our society. Poor Philadelphia! the lofty city, He layeth it low! I am very unwell; my system is quite weak; I feel the want of pure air. We ap-

pointed Tuesday 9 to be observed as a day of humiliation. I preached on 1 Kings viii, 37–40, and had a large and weeping congregation. The preachers left the city on Monday; I continued in order to have the Minutes of Conference printed. Wednesday, 11, we left the city solemn as death. The people of Derby and Chester are sickly, and they are greatly alarmed at Wilmington. I found a quiet retreat at friend Bond's, near New Castle." It was thus that he braved the memorable attack of the yellow fever.

Again he flew over his southern route, whither we have followed him, and by the last week of June, 1794, re-entered Philadelphia "weak and heavy in body and mind," after a day's ride of forty miles, preaching the same evening. He passed rapidly to New England, whence he returned to New York by the middle of September, and opened the Conference on the twenty-second. "Several of our preachers," he writes, "want to know what they shall do when they grow old. I might also ask, What shall I do? Perhaps many of them will not live to grow old. Tuesday, 23, I preached with liberty; but on Thursday night I had a powerful temptation before I went into the church, which sat so heavily on me that I could not preach; yet I trust I was kept from sin. My sleep is so little that my head becomes dizzy, and distresses me much. Four hours' sleep in the night is as much as I can obtain. We concluded our work, and observed Friday as a day of abstinence and prayer, and had a good time at our love-feast. Sunday, 28, preached at ten o'clock at Brooklyn; in the afternoon at the new church, [Forsyth-street, New York,] on 'Woe to them that are at ease in Zion!' I ordained seven deacons and five elders, and in the evening, at the old church, [John-

street,] I preached again. We had the best time at the last, at least it was so to me. All day I was straitened in my throat, and in my heart. We collected two hundred and fifty dollars for the relief of the preachers. This has been a serious week to me; money could not purchase the labor I have gone through."

On Sunday, October 5, he was preaching three times in Philadelphia, and holding a Conference the next day; but before the week closed he was away again southward and westward, to the Carolinas and Tennessee. In June, 1795, we find him again in Philadelphia, and on "Sunday, 21st," he says, "I preached in the city three times, not with the success I would wish. I was exceedingly assisted in meeting the classes, in which I spent three days, and am now of opinion that there is more religion among the society than I expected. I trust both they and myself will remember this visit for days to come. I was also much quickened in meeting the local preachers and leaders, who spoke feelingly of the state of their souls and the work of God. I now go hence to meet new troubles, and to labor while feeble life shall last. Monday, 29, I came to New York. I began meeting the women's classes, and felt happy. I met the official members of the society, and had some close talk on the doctrine and discipline of the Church. Sunday, 5, I preached in Brooklyn, and returned to assist in the sacrament in the afternoon at the new church. I then met the black classes, and preached at half past six. I closed my day's work by meeting two men's classes. Monday, 6, I met nine classes, so that I have now spoken to most of the members here one by one. I left the city in peace, and received of their bounty toward bearing my expenses."

Thus we get but mere glimpses of his episcopal pas-

torate from these meager journals; their citation would seem a waste of paper were it not that they reveal so much, though so indirectly, the tireless man and the apostolic bishop. Wherever he delayed long enough, he performed faithfully this minute pastoral labor.

Again he departs to the Eastern states, ranging through Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont. He re-entered the state of New York in the latter part of August, near the northern frontier, and passed rapidly along, holding rustic meetings among the scattered population; for Methodism, as we have seen, had for some time been breaking into these remote wildernesses, chiefly under the leadership of Garrettson; and Asbury, ever regardful of its interests where they were most critical, penetrated to the farthest tracks of his pioneer itinerants; hence his incessant return to the extreme South, to the ultra-Alleghany frontiers, to New England, and, before long, to the wilds of Upper Canada. In these journeys he must necessarily cross and recross the more settled central fields of the Church, and these he inspects, as we have noticed, with the minutest care, laboring as hard among them as their local pastors; but his records lose here much of their interest; they present little more than the briefest allusions, mere memoranda. He longed for the woods, the mountains, the excitements and hardships of the frontier. It is the fate of energetic men to be restless, to be unhappy without movement and achievement: the cause perhaps, and, in part, the effect of their activity. Asbury was constitutionally melancholy; unconscious, he often writes, "of any sin even in thought," yet in grievous dejection. No medical scholar can fail to observe in his journals, from beginning to end, and especially about this time, a profoundly morbid temperament.

there is now scarcely a page in which we do not witness the heroic struggle of his invincible will with this formidable physical drawback. And the evil grows as he advances in life. He mentions, oftener than ever, his inward conflicts, alternations of joy and sadness, of mental freedom and oppression in the pulpit. He at last perceives the fact that his melancholy is "constitutional," and will end only with his life. This brave struggle with an unconquerable physical evil enhances inexpressibly the greatness of his character and of his unparalleled life. He had not, however, the sagacity or scientific knowledge to perceive that his excessive occupation caused much of his sufferings. It may be soberly affirmed that through all his ministerial career he was doing the work of ten if not twenty ordinary men. No human strength is adequate to such labors as his—journeys on horseback over the worst roads, thirty, forty, fifty miles a day, with almost daily preaching, class-leading, visits from house to house, frequent and laborious sessions of conferences, a correspondence of a thousand letters yearly, for most of the year the poorest fare of log-cabins, with no other luxury than tea, which he always carried with him and often prepared himself beneath a tree, and almost continual sickness, chills, fevers, and rheumatism. Aristotle taught that the vices are the excesses of the virtues. Asbury erred in this respect. His life, effective as it was, might have been more effective if more healthful, physically and mentally. Johnson remarked to Boswell, that to interpret the Scripture command, "be instant in prayer," literally were to abuse it, that no one could thus obey it without becoming a maniac. Asbury, besides his other extreme habits, was almost a literalist in this respect. He usually prayed with families at the close of each meal, at tav-

erns, or wherever else he stopped. He prayed in all his pastoral visits. For years he prayed for each of his preachers by name daily; at every conference he prayed privately over each name on the list of appointments; on his rides he prayed ten minutes each hour, and he records that there were few minutes in the day in which his thoughts were not absorbed in prayer. He fasted every Friday, besides going without food from early morning till late evening several days in almost every week. We cannot wonder then that his life became abnormal, and we cannot but wonder that it was so mighty in spite of that fact. Nor can we be surprised that a tinge of severity, if not moroseness, overspread at times his really generous nature, and somewhat repelled his more diffident associates.

He ranged over the northern regions of New York with much of the zest of his western frontier adventures, preaching in log-cabins to multitudes gathered from great distances. "I find," he writes, "some similarity between the northern and western frontiers." On Sunday, the 30th of October, in Hampton Township, (Washington County, where Philip Embury and Barbara Heck had been founding the Church,) he discovered some hearty pioneer Methodists. "We had," he says, "sacrament and love-feast, and many opened their mouths boldly to testify of the goodness and love of the Lord Jesus. The porch, entry, kitchen, and the lodging-rooms were filled. One soul professed conversion. I find that two hours' close meeting flags the minds of God's children." He penetrated to Ashgrove, the seat of Embury's society, and refreshed the little band in a "solemn meeting." We trace him southward rapidly to "Coeyman's Patent," "weary, sick, and faint, after riding thirty-six miles. We were crowded," he

writes, "with people. I suppose we had perhaps a thousand at the stone church at Coeyman's Patent, and I felt some life and warmth among them. On Sunday, 6, in the morning we had baptism, ordination, sacrament, and love-feast; some spoke with life of the goodness of God. I gave them a discourse at eleven o'clock, and then went to bed with a high fever."

Dr. Roberts, however, was with him from New England, and kept up the labors of the day. On the 12th of September they reached the neighborhood of Rhinebeck, and were comforted with the society of Garrettson. "God," he says, "once put into Brother Garrettson's hands great riches of a spiritual nature, and he labored much; if he now does good according to his temporal ability, he will be blessed by the Lord and men."

Garrettson, faithful in his prosperity, was "blessed by the Lord and men." His beautiful home at Rhinebeck often sheltered, in later years, Asbury and his fellow-laborers. The bishop delighted to call it "Travelers' Rest," and could write, "I do believe God dwells in this house." Through Garrettson he became intimate with, and exerted a salutary influence over, many distinguished families of the region—the Livingstons, Montgomerys, Sands, Rutsens, Van Cortlandts, and others, among whom were raised up memorable examples of the elder Methodism. Catharine Garrettson, a daughter of the Livingston family, was one of those elect "women of Methodism" who ministered to the bishop, like Mary and Martha to his divine Master, from Rhinebeck's "Travelers' Rest" to Perry Hall in Maryland, Rembert Hall in South Carolina, and Russell's mansion among the Holston Heights. He preached at Rhinebeck, but hastened on with Roberts. "We stopped," he says, "at Governor Van Cortlandt's, who

reminds me of General Russell. We had al we needed, and abundantly more than we desired. Rest, rest, how sweet! yet how often in labor I rest, and in rest labor! Sunday, 20, I had a comfortable time at Croton Chapel, on Rom. i, 16. I returned to General Van Cortlandt's, and dined with my dear aged friends. Shall we ever meet again?"

The name of the good governor occurs often in the bishop's journals. He was a hearty Methodist, very rich, inheriting much of the old Cortlandt manor, and lived in a spacious mansion near the mouth of the Croton river. It was the home of many of the primitive itinerants, and had entertained Washington, La Fayette, Franklin, and Whitefield; the latter had preached from its portico to vast throngs. The governor's influence was an important aid to Methodism. He was the first lieutenant-governor of the state, was eighteen times elected to the office, and was president of the convention which formed the state constitution. He gave land for a Methodist church and cemetery, and died, as his epitaph says, "a bright witness of that perfect love which casteth out the fear of death."[1]

"We came," continues the bishop, "to Fisher's, near the White Plains chapel, to hold Conference. My soul is kept solemn, and I feel as if earth were nothing to me; I am happy in God, and not perplexed with the things of this world. Tuesday, 22, a few of us met in

[1] Boehm says: "He married Joanna Livingston. They were both pure spirits. Their daughter, Mrs. Van Wiek, was a gifted woman, a shouting Methodist, who would exhort with great effect. His daughter, Mrs. Gerard Beekman, was also a Methodist, and her son, Dr. Stephen Beekman, at whose house the Rev. John Summerfield died in New York on June 30, 1825. Bishop Asbury greatly admired the old governor, and said he resembled General Russell of Kentucky, who married the sister of Patrick Henry. The governor, full of years and of honors, died on May 1, 1814, in the ninety-fourth year of his age."

Conference, the main body of the preachers not coming in until about twelve o'clock. We went through the business of the session in three days, forty-three preachers being present. I was greatly disappointed in not hearing the preachers give a full and free account of themselves and circuits. Although we sat ten hours in each day, we did not close our business until Thursday evening, after sitting each night till twelve o'clock."

In the first week of October he was again holding a Conference in Philadelphia. "We went on," he writes, "with great peace, love, and deliberation, but were rather irregular, owing to some preachers not coming in until the third or fourth day. We made better stations than could be expected, extending from Northampton, in Virginia, to the Seneca Lake. Friday, 9, we observed as a day of fasting and prayer. I preached at eleven o'clock on Joel ii, 15–17. Saturday, 10, our Conference rose. Sunday, 11, I preached in the morning at the African church, in the afternoon at Ebenezer, and in the evening at St. George's, where, to my surprise, the galleries were filled. I applied, 'Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.' I had work enough, being often compelled to digress to call the attention of the wild people."

After another tour over the South and West he entered Pennsylvania, west of the mountains, in the first week in June, 1796, and held a Conference at Uniontown, where the pioneer evangelists of the Monongahela, the Alleghany, and the Yohogany greeted him, and by the last week in July we find him again preaching and "meeting classes in the city" of Philadelphia. He prepared a subscription paper for the relief of suffering preachers and their families, and then

"hasted with it from house to house." On the 15th of August he rode into New York to repeat the thorough work we have seen him performing there before—in "meeting classes, and visiting from house to house a good deal of the time in the day, and frequently preaching at night." He spent more than two weeks there at this hottest part of the year, "generally walking three or four miles a day, praying ten or twelve times in the congregation, families, and classes," and closing the day with a sermon or a social religious meeting. On one Sunday we find him preaching three times and leading six classes. He ended the visit with a meeting of all the city class-leaders "in close conference," another meeting of the trustees on the same day, and then, "after going hither and thither," preached in the evening. We cannot be surprised that, with such a leader, the ministry and people of early Methodism were kept continually astir. Asbury's own character and example, maintained with unwavering fidelity from the beginning to the end of his episcopal career, afford an obvious solution to the problem of the energy and success of American Methodism. Our chief regret, in following him on his rapid flights over the land, is that the paucity of details in his journals do not admit of more fullness and consistence in the narration of his wondrous life. Such as they are, however, they, or nothing, must be given. They suffice to suggest, at least, his general character, and the continuous extension of the Church.

He passed again into New England, returned to Baltimore, holding Conferences at New York and Philadelphia, and prepared, at Perry Hall, for the next General Conference.

CHAPTER V.

METHODISM IN THE MIDDLE AND NORTHERN STATES, 1792–1796.

Paucity of Documents in the Middle States — George Pickering — His Spartan Character — Ezekiel Cooper — His Labors — His Character — His Passion for Angling — John M'Claskey's Rank and Services — Lawrence M'Comb's Character and Labors — Dr. Thomas F. Sargent — His Labors — His Death in the Pulpit — Thomas Morrell — A Successful Failure — He Founds Methodism in Chatham, N. J. — Itinerant Labors — Asbury's Tea — Morrell's Triumphant Death — His Appearance and Character — Ware Itinerating among the Tioga Mountains — On the Hudson — Trials of the Itinerancy — A Suffering Preacher — Success — Colbert among the Wyoming, Tioga, and Cumberland Valleys — His Hardships — Henry B. Bascom — Asbury among these Valleys — Thomas and Christian Bowman — Thornton Fleming — Methodism in the Lake Country of New York — Valentine Cook — A Student at Cokesbury — Power of his Preaching — His Sufferings — His Farewell Sermon — Results — Extension of Methodism in the Middle States — Its Singular Introduction into Southold, L. I. — Statistics.

Methodism, in its denser communities of the Middle and Northern States, though prosperous during this period, presents few of those salient events which mark its history in its remoter fields. It was here established in a well defined and somewhat cultivated territory, and was comparatively tranquil. The journals of Asbury record, as we have seen, but passing allusions to it, and, though its ministry embodied a majority of the leading men of the itinerancy, yet were they singularly indifferent to any record of their great work. Of no section of the Church have we fewer published accounts than of the vigorous societies and powerful men of the middle states, and the historian, in gathering together

the scattered fragments of his materials, must feel painfully that he can construct of them no narrative commensurate with the importance and traditional estimation of this portion of the denomination.

At the beginning of the period George Pickering appears on the Dover Circuit, Del.; and though he had, as already intimated, a brief previous training in the itinerancy of the South, yet he legitimately belongs at this time to the Methodism of the middle states, being not only a laborer in its field, but having entered the Church and begun to preach in Philadelphia. He was born in Talbot County, Md., in 1769, converted in St. George's Church, Philadelphia, when eighteen years old, and almost immediately began his public labors. In 1790 he was received on probation by the Conference. He lived to be the oldest active preacher in the itinerancy, and in his semi-centenary sermon remarked: "When I joined there were but about five conferences, two hundred and twenty-seven traveling preachers, forty-six thousand white, and eleven or twelve thousand colored members. Five or six only of those ministers are now living, and I only continue in the itinerancy. I am now an old man, and shall not labor much longer with you; but go on, my brethren, preach Jesus, preach with the Holy Ghost. Preach to the people the blessed doctrine of holiness, it is the only thing that will bind the Methodist Church together. Pray for me, my brethren, and the blessing of an old man be upon you." He said this in 1840, in the far East, where he then stood a pillar of New England Methodism, and a patriarch of the denomination, venerated through all its borders.

George Pickering was a rare man in all respects. Any just delineation of him must comprehend the whole

man, for it was not his distinction to be marked by a few extraordinary traits, but by general excellence. In person he was tall, slight, and perfectly erect. His countenance was expressive of energy, shrewdness, self-command, and benignity; and in advanced life his silvered locks, combed precisely behind his ears, gave him a strikingly venerable appearance. The exactitude of his mind extended to all his physical habits. In pastoral labors, exercise, diet, sleep, and dress, he followed a fixed course, which scarcely admitted of deviation. In the last respect he was peculiarly neat, holding, with an old divine, that "cleanliness comes next to holiness." He continued to the last to wear the plain Quakerlike dress of the first Methodist ministry, and none could be more congruous with the bearing of his person and his venerable aspect. His voice was clear and powerful, and his step firm to the end.

His intellectual traits were not of the highest, but of the most useful order. Method was perhaps his strongest mental habit, and it comprehended nearly every detail of his daily life. His sermons were thoroughly "skeletonized." His personal habits had the mechanical regularity of clock-work. During his itinerant life he devoted to his family, residing permanently at one place, a definite portion of his time; but even these domestic visits were subjected to the most stringent regularity. During fifty years of married life he spent, upon an average, but about one fifth of his time at home, an aggregate of ten years out of fifty. This rigor may indeed have been too severe. It reminds us of the noble but defective virtue of the old Roman character. If business called him to the town of his family residence at other times than those

appropriated to his domestic visits, he returned to his post of labor without crossing the threshold of his home. In that terrible calamity which spread gloom over the land—the burning of the steamer Lexington by night on Long Island Sound—he lost a beloved daughter. The intensity of the affliction was not capable of enhancement, yet he stood firmly on his ministerial watch-tower, though with a bleeding heart, while his family, but a few miles distant, were frantic with anguish. Not till the due time did he return to them. When it arrived he entered the house with a sorrow-smitten spirit, pressed in silence the hand of his wife, and, without uttering a word, retired to an adjacent room, where he spent some hours in solitude and unutterable grief. Such a man reminds us of Brutus, and, in the heroic times, would have been commemorated as superhuman.

He pretended to no subtlety, and was seldom, if ever, known to preach a metaphysical discourse. The literal import of the Scriptures, and its obvious applications to experimental and practical religion, formed the substance of his sermons. Perspicuity of style resulted from this perspicacity of thought. The most unlettered listener could have no difficulty in comprehending his meaning, and the children of his audience generally shared the interest of his adult hearers. Bombast and metaphysical elaborateness in the pulpit he silently but profoundly contemned as indicating a lack both of good sense and disinterested purpose in the preacher. It has been said that a man of few words is either a sage or a fool. George Pickering was seldom, if ever, known to occupy three minutes at a time in the discussions (usually so diffuse) of the Annual Conferences, and the directness of his sentences and the

pertinence of his counsels always indicated the practical sage.

Almost unerring prudence marked his life. If not sagacious at seizing new opportunities, he was almost infallibly perfect in that negative prudence which attains safety and confidence. No man who knew him would have apprehended surprise or defeat in any measure undertaken by him after his usual deliberation. His character was full of energy, but it was the energy of the highest order of minds, never wavering, never impulsive. He would have excelled in any department of public life which requires chiefly wisdom and virtue As a statesman, he would always have been secure, if not successful; as a military commander, his whole character would have guarantied that confidence, energy, discipline, and foresight which win victory more effectually than hosts.

In combination with these characteristics, and forming no unfavorable contrast with them, was his well-known humor. I have already attempted to account for the prevalence of this trait among the early Methodist itinerants. It seemed natural to the constitution of Pickering's mind. In him, however, it was always benevolent. It seldom or never took the form of satire. It was that "sanctified wit," as it has been called, which pervades the writings of Henry, Fuller, and other old religious authors in our literature, and the smile excited by it in the hearer was caused more by an odd and surprising appositeness in his remarks or illustrations, than by any play of words or pungency of sentiment.

The moral features of his character were pre-eminent, yet they blended too much into a whole to admit of individual prominence. No one virtue stood out in

relief amid a multitude of contrasting defects. Had he lived in the days of the Roman Commonwealth he might have competed with Cato for the Censorship; not so much, however, from his rigorous construction of the morals of others, as by the rigorous perfection of his own. He had an unwavering faith in the evangelical doctrines. "Christ, and him crucified," was the joy of his heart, the ground of his hope, and the theme of his preaching. His zeal was ardent, but steady, never flickering through fifty-seven years of ministerial labors and travels. It gave peculiar energy to his discourses. For more than half a century his armor was never off; but he was always ready for every good word and work. He was incessant in prayer, and who ever heard from him a languid supplication? He continued to the last the goodly habit, common among his early associates in the ministry, of praying after meals in any company, however casual or vivacious the circle. He was a man of one work, the ministry of reconciliation; and of one purpose, the glory of God. We shall soon meet him again in his Eastern field.

Ezekiel Cooper was, down to our own day, one of the representative men of Methodism, and was particularly prominent during most of the present period by his superior abilities in the pulpits of New York and Philadelphia. Like Wells and Pickering, he became one of the founders of the Church in New England, lived long enough to attain the distinction of being the oldest member of any Methodist conference in the western hemisphere, and only one survived in the old world who had preceded him. He was born in Caroline County, Md., February 22, 1763. His father was an officer in the Revolutionary army. Freeborn Garrettson came into the neighborhood, as we have seen, and

proposed to preach. The soldiers were at that time upon duty; they were drawn up in front of the house, and formed into a hollow square, while Garrettson stood in the center and addressed them. During his sermon his attention was attracted by the thoughtful aspect of a boy leaning upon a gate, and apparently absorbed in the discourse. That boy became the distinguished evangelist, Ezekiel Cooper.

He commenced his itinerant ministry in 1785, on Long Island Circuit. In 1786 he traveled East Jersey Circuit. There were then but ten Methodist preachers in the entire state, and only about twelve hundred members; but when he died New Jersey had become an annual conference, with one hundred and forty preachers, and more than thirty thousand members. After 1785 he traveled successively Trenton, N. J., Baltimore, Annapolis, Md., (two years,) and Alexandria, D. C., Circuits. We miss him in the Minutes of 1792, but in 1793 he reappears in them as presiding elder of Boston District, which comprehended the whole Methodist field in the eastern portion of New England, taking in the province of Maine, and extending to the mouth of the Providence River. His word was in great power, and often characterized by profound theological exposition, such as interested New England taste by its logical acumen, while it smote the conscience by its hortative force. He left the East in one year, and labored at Brooklyn and New York. He spent four years in Philadelphia and Wilmington, two at each respectively, and in 1799 took charge of the book business of the Church as "editor and general agent." His abilities for this office were soon shown to be of the highest order. He gave to the "Book Concern" that impulse and organization which has rendered

it the largest publishing establishment in the new world. After managing its interests with admirable success for six years, during which its capital stock had risen from almost nothing to forty-five thousand dollars, he resumed his itinerant labors, and continued them in Brooklyn, New York city, Wilmington, Del., Baltimore, etc., for eight years, when he located. He remained in the latter relation during eight years, when he re-entered the effective ranks, but was soon afterward placed on the supernumerary list in the Philadelphia Conference. He continued, however, for many years to perform extensive service, traversing many circuits, visiting the Churches, and part of the time superintending a district. During the latter part of his life he resided in Philadelphia.

His personal appearance embodied the finest ideal of age, intelligence, and tranquil piety. His frame was tall and slight, his locks white with years, his forehead high and prominent, and his features expressive of reflection and serenity. A wen had been enlarging on his neck from his childhood, but without detracting from the peculiarly elevated and characteristic expression of his face. He was considered by his ministerial associates a "living encyclopædia" in respect not only to theology, but most other departments of knowledge, and his large and accurate information was only surpassed by the range and soundness of his judgment. He sustained a pre-eminent position in the Church during most of its history.

One of his brethren, who followed him to the grave, wrote: "After becoming superannuated he labored extensively in the work, preaching at camp-meetings, quarterly-meetings, and other occasions, with great power and success. He continued to preach occasion-

ally, till near the close of life, with general acceptability and profit to the people. His sickness was rather short, nor could I learn that his sufferings were very severe. When asked respecting his state of mind, he invariably answered, 'Calm and peaceful.' On one occasion, after having been engaged in prayer some time, he broke out in praise, and shouted, 'Halleluiah! halleluiah!' for about a dozen times. On a subsequent occasion his joy was greatly ecstatic, and he praised God aloud. For a few days before he died he said little, but was calm and peaceful, till on Sunday, the 21st of February, 1847, the weary wheels of life stood still at last, and he sweetly fell asleep in Jesus. He was a man of respectable connections, with a mind disciplined in early life, of great logical and argumentative powers, fully stored by reading and observation, and a most powerful antagonist to those who would encounter him. In the defense and publication of truth he never shrank or faltered, and as he was a companion and fellow-laborer with Jesse Lee in New England, he was often called upon to contend against the errors of the times both in public and private. He fell in his Master's service, and entered upon his reward, aged eighty-four years, and in the sixty-second of his ministry."[1] "He became one of the most able pulpit orators of his day. At times an irresistible pathos accompanied his preaching, and, in the forest worship, audiences of ten thousand would be so enchanted by his discourses that the most profound attention, interest, and solemnity prevailed. In public debate he possessed powers almost unequaled, and he seldom advocated a measure that did not prevail. He always treated his opponents with great respect, and the preachers called him Lycurgus,

[1] Letter of Rev. Wm. Livesey to the author.

from his great knowledge and wisdom. He became very frugal and saving, which was probably caused by his long life of celibacy; but this frugality did not seem to arise from an avaricious spirit, for he was liberal to the poor, especially poor widows. His estate was valued at fifty thousand dollars, and the part left to benevolent objects, it is said, failed of its good mission in consequence of an imperfect codicil. He was known as a great angler; like Isaak Walton, he carried his fishing-tackle with him, and was ever ready to give a reason for his recreation. Bishop Scott says that his walking-cane was arranged for a fishing-rod, and he always had on hand scriptural argument to prove that fishing was an apostolical practice. On one occasion, when he returned from an excursion without catching anything, a preacher was much disposed to laugh at his poor success. 'Never mind,' said the reverend old angler, 'although I have caught nothing, while watching my line I have finished the outlines of one or two sermons.' So his time had not been idly spent. He published but little, except his long sermons on the death of Bishop Asbury and John Dickins. They are biographically valuable, but his talent as a preacher very evidently exceeded his ability as an author. He lived to see the population of our country multiply from three to twenty millions, and the membership of his Church increase from fifteen thousand to more than a million. When he entered the ministry (1784) there were only eighty-three ministers in all the conferences; at his death they had increased to five thousand."[2]

John M'Claskey's name has repeatedly appeared in our narrative. During these times he was leader, as presiding elder, of a host of powerful men on the

[2] "The Methodist," New York, June 16, 1866.

Philadelphia and New Jersey districts, the latter including all the state and a part of that of New York. He also occupied the stations of Baltimore and Philadelphia at intervals of this period. He was one of the Methodistic apostles of his day. He was born in Ireland in 1756, came to America when about sixteen years old, and settled in Salem, N. J., was converted in 1782, and shortly after began to exhort, and, later, to preach "with uncommon success."[3] Full of zeal and Irish ardor, he joined the itinerant band in 1785, and the next year was admitted to the Philadelphia Conference. Down to 1790 he labored in New Jersey, and, with Abbott and others, extended the Church over most of the state. He continued to be one of the most prominent evangelists of the middle states till 1814, when his health failed, and he fell, with a triumphant death, at the head of the Chesapeake District. His last sermon, preached at Church Hill, Queen Anne Circuit, was from Isaiah lxi, 1–3, and was peculiarly solemn and powerful. After suffering severely he died at Chestertown, Md., on the second of September, 1814. In his last sufferings he was heard often to sing

> "Surely Thou wilt not long delay;
> I hear his Spirit cry,
> 'Arise, my love, make haste away,
> Go, get thee up, and die.'"

He held a high rank among the many gifted preachers which Ireland has given to American Methodism, and was a natural orator, with a fervid imagination, a warm heart, and a singular readiness of speech. "He had but to open his mouth," says one of his contemporaries, "and right words and right thoughts flowed

[3] Minutes of 1815.

forth unbidden."[4] His enthusiasm in the pulpit frequently rose into sublime and irresistible power. His voice had uncommon sweetness, and he could command it as a flute or a trumpet. His aspect and mien were noble. "John M'Claskey," says the same authority, "was stationed in New York when I joined the Conference, and it devolved upon him to deliver an address to the young men after they had been examined. That address, I well remember, appeared to me exceedingly appropriate and impressive. He dwelt with much earnestness on the importance of adhering rigidly, in our preaching, to the great truths of the Gospel. 'You may be tempted,' said he, 'to think that you must go on and leave first principles;' and he then related an anecdote of one preacher having said of another that he 'told old Adam's story too much;' 'but,' he added, 'you must not fail to tell old Adam's story; you must bring out the great fundamental doctrine of man's depravity, or you cannot hope that souls will be saved by your preaching.' I was exceedingly impressed on that occasion by his personal appearance. He was a very large, portly man, of full face, ruddy complexion, fine countenance, and his raven black hair parted, and hung down loosely upon his shoulders. John Brodhead, Peter Moriarty, and several other fine-looking men were sitting with him, and, as I looked at them with no small degree of admiration, I could not forbear to say within myself, 'With such men we can take the world.' He was undoubtedly regarded as among the most forcible and able preachers we had among us in his day. He exerted great influence upon the general affairs of the Church. His sound judgment and great wisdom rendered him an excellent counselor, and his

[4] Rev. Dr. Laban Clark, in Sprague, p. 126.

uncommon energy rarely failed to accomplish any purpose to which his efforts were directed." Like not a few of the itinerants of that age, and especially the Irish ones, he was habitually genial, and addicted to humor in spite of his ministerial toils and sufferings, and also a constitutional tendency to occasional depression. "He knew how to give and take a joke as well as any other man."

Lawrence M'Combs began his travels at the beginning of this period, a youth of twenty-three years, full of strength and ardor. He was born in Kent County, Del., in 1769, joined the Philadelphia Conference in 1792, and traveled Newburgh Circuit, which extended from the southern boundary of New York to beyond Albany, and, including the whole range of the Catskill Mountains, stretched away into the valley of the Wyoming. "His power of physical endurance," remarks one of his friends, "may be inferred from the fact that, while traveling this immense field, he preached twice nearly every day of the week, and on each Sabbath either three or four times. To reach the villages and little settlements dotting the country his traveling was all on horseback, and through a region whose extensive wildernesses were, for the most part, the undisturbed abode of the wolf and the panther. Here this intrepid young man urged his way over mountains, and through valleys, stirring the community wherever he came with hymn and sermon, until the wilderness and solitary place were made glad. His popularity became almost unbounded, and, from the very commencement of his ministry, crowds attended his appointments. There were few church edifices, and his preaching during the milder season was chiefly in the fields."[5] His subse-

[5] Rev. Dr. Kennaday, in Sprague, 211.

quent labors, for more than forty years, were in New England (for five years) and the middle states as far as Baltimore. He became one of "the giants of those days." "No hostility could intimidate him in the course of duty, nor could any provocation betray him into petulance or resentment. His perceptions were quick and clear, and his judgment sober and impartial. He had a fine imagination, which, being restrained and regulated by his admirable taste, gave beauty and warmth to all his pictures. His personal appearance was very imposing. In stature he was full six feet in height, with a finely developed form, though not corpulent; the breadth of his chest indicated the prodigious strength which enabled him to perform his almost gigantic labors. The general expression of his countenance betokened intelligence, gentleness, and energy, while his full, frank face was illumined by his ever-kindling eye. His voice was full, clear, and of great flexibility, sweeping from the lowest to the highest tone, and modulated in the most delicate manner, in beautiful harmony with his subject. In preaching in the field, which was his favorite arena, I used to think he was quite an approach to Whitefield. Such was his known power at camp-meetings that the announcement that he was to be present on such an occasion would draw a multitude of people from great distances. I have never witnessed such an immense throng on any other occasion as I have known him at such times to address; but those who stood at the greatest distance from him could hear every word with perfect distinctness, and the most profound attention and solemnity usually pervaded his audience. M'Combs was always an active and influential member of the Conference. With the founders of the Church he had been in

intimate personal relations, having been admitted by them to the work within eight years after the Church was organized upon an episcopal basis. Enjoying the fullest confidence of these men, and of the first bishops, who afterward manifested their confidence in him by soliciting his counsel, it was not strange that his opinions were regarded by his Conference with the profoundest respect. Many of his most intimate friends in the ministry, including Ware and Morrell, had been active soldiers in the war of the Revolution, and brought a spirit of heroism with them into the ministry, which accorded well with the spirit of his other colleagues—Garrettson, Cooper, and many more—who were no less intrepid as standard-bearers in 'the sacred host of God's elect.' Outliving these in effective service, M'Combs was, in some respects, the link by which the first and third generations of preachers were held together. He therefore the more readily secured that confidence to which he was so well entitled by his high ability, his sterling integrity, and his manifold sacrifices in aid of the cause."[6]

He had his faults, however. A high authority remarks that "he was a man of genial and cheerful spirit, and greatly enjoyed society; though there was a tendency, in the latter part of his life, to melancholy and impatience. Nor was it easy for him to learn that lesson, which all must learn who live to old age, 'He must increase, but I must decrease.' As a preacher, he had great power over the masses. He dealt much in controversy, but was not a close thinker, and his style was diffuse, and even wordy.[7] As he warmed in speaking

[6] Kennaday.

[7] Clark says, "A Frenchman, after hearing him preach, exclaimed with great enthusiasm, 'Dat man's tongue is hung in the middle, and

he had a singular habit of elevating, I think, his right shoulder by sudden jerks. He wore his hair combed smoothly back, and, being long, it fell somewhat upon his shoulders. His countenance was of an open and benevolent expression. His whole appearance was attractive and impressive, suggesting repose of mind, sympathy, self-possession, and authority."[8]

Dr. Thomas F. Sargent was also one of the chiefs of the ministry of these times. One of his most intimate itinerant associates says: "His stature was about six feet, his figure portly and imposing, his features were handsome, and the whole contour of his countenance indicated a natural nobility and generosity. He appeared like one born to command. When I was stationed in Philadelphia, and by circumstances thrown a good deal into his company, I had the means of forming a full appreciation of his character, and I have seldom known a nobler or truer man, or one more firm in principle, frank in manners, or honorable in conduct. He had a lofty sense of honor, and an absolute loathing for everything mean or despicable. Like many men combining such traits, with the elements that contribute strength of character, he sometimes expressed himself strongly and warmly in regard to anything reprehensible. It is not therefore to be wondered at that he sometimes made enemies; but, on the other hand, he secured warm and enduring friendships, for his affections were as strong as his sentiments were noble, and his manners frank and cordial."[9]

His sudden death in the pulpit startled the whole

goes at both ends.' The foreigner was converted, and became a Methodist preacher."

[8] Bishop Scott, in Sprague, p. 214.

[9] Rev. Dr. Holdich in Sprague, p. 261.

Methodist public, for he was generally known. "For some weeks before the awful event," writes his wife, "the Lord was drawing him very near to himself, and preparing him for his great change. He was always kind; but there was now an unusual kindness and tenderness to the children and myself, and uncommon fervor and unction attended his prayers both in the family and in public. His preaching is much talked of, especially his Christmas morning sermon. His prayer in the family that morning will never be forgotten. O, my dear children, let us take comfort, and follow him, as he followed Christ! On Sabbath morning he rose as usual, and then breakfasted. Just before going to church he observed that his breakfast did not set well. We went, however, and Brother Elliott preached, and your father made the concluding prayer, which was most comprehensive and delightful. He ate a very light dinner, and observed that, as he had to preach at night, he would not go out in the afternoon. I went, and took the four youngest children with me. When we returned he was lying on the sofa. I said to him, 'Why, dear, I find you where I left you.' He replied, 'Yes; but I have not been here all the time. I have been preparing to preach. I wish you would hurry coffee; I think it will help my head, which aches.' We soon had coffee. He drank two cups, ate but little, and said, on rising from the table, 'Don't hurry yourselves; I'll go on to the meeting.'"[10] Soon the melancholy tidings were brought to the door that he was taken sick in the church. The family hastened thither, but found him stretched on a pallet, below the pulpit, dead.

Thomas Morrell is one of the most familiar names in our early records, as an able preacher, an itinerant of

[10] Letter to her Son, Rev. T. B. Sargent.

long and very general service, and a traveling compar ion of Asbury. He was born in the city of New York, November 22, 1747."[11] His mother was a member of Embury's first class; but the family removed early to Elizabethtown, N. J., where there were no Methodists, and joined the Presbyterian Church. At the very outbreak of the Revolution young Morrell harangued his fellow-youth of the town on the news from Lexington and Concord, formed a company of volunteers, and led them to the army. He was honored by Congress with commissions as captain and major. He was severely wounded in the battle of Long Island, and shared in other hard service of the war. Dr. Murray, a distinguished Presbyterian pastor at Elizabethtown, who preached his funeral sermon, and learned his history by frequent conversations with him in his latter years, says that "on the fatal 27th of August, 1776, he and his company were in advance of the main army on the Heights of Flatbush, and received the first attack of the British. As the result of the battle, three thousand freemen were either killed, wounded, or made prisoners. Morrell's company was nearly cut to pieces, but few of them remaining. He himself lay wounded on the field, having received a ball in his right breast, which passed through his body about an inch above his lungs, fracturing his shoulder-blade, and a lighter wound in his hand. As the enemy came up in pursuit of the flying Americans, he called to the commander of the advanced body to send a man to take him off, as he was severely wounded; when, instead of assistance, several muskets were leveled and fired at him in a moment. He fell, feigning himself dead, and they passed on. Shortly afterward he was taken from the ground by a young

[11] Sprague, p. 147.

volunteer, and was carried on a hurdle to New York, and thence to his father's house in Elizabethtown by six soldiers, permitted by Washington himself to perform this kind service. On the approach of Lord Cornwallis to Elizabethtown he was removed to New Providence, to the house of the Rev. Jonathan Elmer, where, by the blessing of God accompanying medical skill and attention, he finally recovered. Before the wounds received at Flatbush were entirely healed there was sent to him a commission as major of the Fourth Jersey Regiment of the Continental Army, commanded by Colonel Ephraim Martin and Lieutenant-Colonel Brearly. He accepted the appointment, and was out through nearly the whole campaign of 1777. On the 11th of September of that year he was at the battle of Brandywine, one of the hottest engagements of the whole Revolution. He belonged to the division which guarded the passage of Chadsford with great gallantry, but which eventually gave way under the furious assault of Knyphausen. In this engagement the regiment of Major Morrell suffered most severely. It was on this bloody day that Lafayette received the wound in his leg that sent him halting to his grave. At this time Major Morrell's health seemed to be rapidly declining; but such was his ardor in his country's cause that he could not bring himself to retire from active duty. And, notwithstanding his great feebleness, we find him, on the night of the third of October, 1777, marching to the attack of Germantown. The attack commenced on the morning of the fourth, at the dawn of the day, and the battle raged with great violence nearly to its close. Major Morrell was in the hottest of it. And, though not entirely successful, this engagement gained for the army of Washington unfading laurels. Here closes the

major's military career. His health being now so much reduced as to disqualify him altogether for active service, Washington reluctantly gave his assent to his retirement, regretting to part with so skillful and brave an officer. After thus serving his country, amid perils by sea and by land, by night and by day, for nearly two years, he retired to his father's house in Elizabethtown, and again engaged with him in mercantile pursuits."[12]

He always retained the friendship of Washington, and personally conducted, as we have noticed, the official interview of the Methodist bishops with the great first president in 1789, in which the denomination was the first of American Churches to recognize publicly the new government.

Notwithstanding the piety of his Methodist mother, Morrell continued unconverted till about his thirty-eighth year, when John Haggerty, one of the noted itinerants of the time, entered Elizabethtown, and, inquiring for a lodging place, was directed to the home of the Morrells as the only one in which a Methodist might find a welcome, for no society had yet been formed in the town by the denomination. Young Morrell had heard his mother relate wonders of the early struggles and successes of her people in New York, and the youth listened with eager interest to the sermon of Haggerty under his own father's roof. "It was from the text, 'God so loved the world,' etc. He was awakened under it, and after a few months was converted. The foundation of Methodism in Elizabeth was laid at that time, and it continues still to prosper there notwithstanding formidable obstacles. Haggerty was the first Methodist preacher Morrell ever

[12] Sprague, p. 147.

heard. At his earnest solicitation, about three months after his conversion, the latter abandoned a lucrative business, 'and commenced preaching in different places, his appointments being made by Haggerty as he passed round the circuit.' One of his first efforts as a preacher was made 'at the house of his uncle, at Chatham, Morris County, N. J. Having been its officer in the army of the Revolution, and for several years subsequently a merchant in Elizabeth, he was widely known, and a very large assembly convened to hear the 'major' preach, especially as he had joined the sect everywhere spoken against. This was his third or fourth effort, and was, by himself, deemed an *utter failure*. He then concluded that he was not called of God to preach, and would not make the attempt again. Early the ensuing morning, while at breakfast at his uncle's, there was a knock at the door. A lady entered, desiring to see the preacher of the previous evening. In a few moments another came, and then an old man upon the same errand, all of whom had been awakened under the sermon deemed by him a failure. They had come to learn the way of salvation more perfectly. The doctrine to them was new, as they had been brought up under Calvinistic influences. He of course recalled his purpose to preach no more, and was encouraged to go forward.[13]

There were probably no Methodists in Chatham at this time. This successful "failure" of Morrell's sermon founded its Church. The local historian says that very soon afterward there was a society of Methodists there, and some time previous to 1790, probably about 1786 or 1787, they projected a chapel; but their number being small, and their means limited, they were led to

[13] Atkinson's "Methodism in New Jersey," p. 318.

"Through the tender mercy of God, I have lived to see the beginning of another year, being now ninety years, one month, and nine days old—a longer period than any of our family have lived. I have many things to be thankful for—my life being prolonged to so advanced an age, having the faculties of my mind in perfect exercise, my health tolerably good, sleep sound, appetite good, my wife in health, my children all religious and in health, my son successful as a preacher, my soul devoted to God, and plenty of temporal things. Would to God I was more thankful, more holy, more heavenly-minded. This morning I have devoted my soul and body to God; and though I am unable to preach as formerly, yet I am endeavoring by grace to walk with God. The Church here is in a low state. Lord, revive thy work in my soul, and in our and the other Churches, for Christ's sake. Amen and Amen."

On the 9th of the following August he died with the "full assurance of hope." Shortly before expiring he exclaimed, "Though I walk through the valley and shadow of death I will fear no evil, for the Lord is with me." "Why do you weep?" he said to his sobbing wife, "I am going to glory!" "I have gotten the victory," he later exclaimed, and died faintly uttering "All is well!"

Like most of the early Methodist preachers, formed on the model of Wesley and Asbury, he was a man of thoroughly defined habits and character. He was an early riser, scrupulously temperate and frugal, and punctual to preciseness. "He never put off the work of one day to another, or of one hour to another. Hence every thing around him and belonging to him was in order. It was also one of his standing rules, to owe no man any thing but love; and, at the hour of his

departure, there was not probably a man living to whom he owed a penny. In his person he was very neat. He suffered nothing to come under his eye which he did not scrutinize, and from which he did not draw some useful lesson. He possessed great energy and activity. He never desired rest on this side the grave. As long as he could ascend the pulpit, he preached the Gospel. He was always occupied with something; and hence, to the very last, he was cheerful. He carried with him, down to extreme old age, the freshness, buoyancy, and energy of youthful feeling, and the entire capability of attending to all his business with the utmost punctuality and accuracy. He was a pungent, practical, and at times a powerful preacher. And when he denounced the wrath of God against the impenitent, he did it with an authority and power which spread awe and solemnity over the whole assembly. In feeling, and doctrine, and Church polity, he was a decided Methodist: but toward other evangelical denominations he was as liberal as the Gospel which he preached. He was, in fine, a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith. His appearance was unique and striking. He was rather short in stature, but strongly built. His neck was short, his head not large, his eye bright and blue, his lips thin, and his whole appearance indicative of much more than ordinary firmness. He always wore a covering on his head, like a smoking cap, from beneath which his hair fell gracefully on his neck. For his age his step was quick, and his conversation vivacious. He always appeared as if dressed for company. He wore a long frock-coat buttoned to his chin, and, without the least ostentation, was a man of the old school. His memory was retentive to the last, and his

senses seemed unimpaired by years, so that, when in the humor of talking, he would give the most truthful and thrilling narratives of the various scenes, military and missionary, through which he had passed. Up to a short time before his death he was not only an interesting, but an amusing companion."[15]

Thomas Ware was active in the itinerancy during our present period. After spending a part of 1792 on Staten Island Circuit, then reaching far into New Jersey, he was appointed presiding elder on the Susquehanna District, a vast and rugged field, comprising six large circuits. Between two of these circuits, Flanders and Wyoming, he says "the way on the Susquehanna was dreary enough; and from thence to Tioga all but impassable, especially in winter. The first time I attempted this tour in the winter, when I came to the mountain through which the river passes, the road being full of ice, it was impossible to keep it; so I had no alternative but to turn back and take the ice in the river. I was afterward told that it was believed no person had ever passed the dangerous defile in this way before. In several places there were chasms in the ice of several feet in width running nearly across the river, occasioned by the water's falling until the ice, resting upon the ridges of rocks underneath, was broken. Over these my horse had to leap. But a greater danger arose from the wearing of the ice by the current below, so that in some places it was plainly to be seen. Protected by a kind Providence, however, I passed safely through. At this time none seemed to care for these poor people in the wilderness except the Methodists."

And yet the self-sacrificing evangelists who were

[15] Murray, in Sprague, p. 149.

bringing to them the Gospel, had to bear not only the hardships of the wilderness, but no little hostility and persecution. They broke their way effectively, however, into all those mountainous regions, and have left their shining trails almost everywhere among them.

In 1793 Ware took charge of Garrettson's great field, or, at least, the northern part of it, then called the Albany District. It was, he writes, immensely large, and the country principally new. Accommodations for the preachers were, for the most part, poor, and the means of their support extremely limited. While passing through one of the circuits, soon after he came on the district, he called at the preacher's house, who happened at that time to be at home. It was near noon, and he, of course, must dine there. The poor itinerant had a wife and seven children; and their bill of fare was one blackberry pie, with rye crust, without either butter or lard to shorten it. After they had dined, and Ware was about to depart, he put a few dollars into the hands of his suffering brother, who, on receiving them, sat down and wept so heartily that Ware could not avoid weeping with him. "The Lord was with us," he adds, "in a very glorious manner, at some of our quarterly meetings, during the first quarter; and there appeared to be a general expectation that he would do still greater things for us throughout the vast field we had to cultivate. Here, as in Tennessee, there were multitudes of people wholly destitute of the Gospel, until it was brought to them by the Methodists."

There were many small settlements without any religious provisions whatever till the itinerants reached them. They flew from one to another, preaching continually, and in our day we see the results of their

labors and sufferings in prosperous Churches, studding all the "parts of four states" which, says Ware, were "embraced in my district." He had a corps of indomitable men under his command, such as Hezekiah C. Wooster, Elijah Woolsey, Aaron Hunt, James Coleman, Shadrach Bostwick, John Finnegan, and many others—men who could not fail to awaken a sensation of public interest, favorable or hostile, wherever they appeared. Through incredible labors and sufferings they were now laying the broad foundations of Methodism along most of the extent of the Hudson. "Here," writes Ware, "I experienced, for the first time in my life, what Milton means by 'joint-racking rheums.'" "Although most of the preachers on the district were young in years, or the ministry, or both, and a heavy tide of opposition bore down upon us, yet under the direction of our divine Guide we were enabled to stem the torrent; and at the end of each year we found that we had gained a little, and had acquired some more strength and skill to use the weapons of our spiritual warfare. At some of our quarterly meetings the sacred influence was so evidently present that it neutralized all opposition, and we seemed, as the boatman descending the Mohawk in time of flood, to have nothing to do but to guide the helm."

We have already noticed the extraordinary rise of Methodism in the Wyoming, Cumberland, and Tioga regions, and the outspread of the Hudson River District, by Garrettson and Ware's itinerants, to those then remote fields—the labors of Anning Owen, Nathaniel B. Mills, and William Colbert.[16] Ware's trials among the Tioga wilds were fully shared by his associates. Colbert set out from the General Conference of 1792 for this wil-

[16] Vol. ii, p. 333.

derness, confronting wintry hardships most of the way, and arriving at Nanticoke, in Wyoming Valley, by the second of December. The next day he writes: "This morning set off for Tioga; got to Lackawanna in the afternoon, where I fed my horse at Baldwin's tavern, on the bank of the Susquehanna. I traveled on, thinking that when I got to Dalytown I would get some refreshment for myself; but I was so unfortunate as to wander into an uninhabited wilderness, till the gloomy wings of starless and moonless night began to cover me. I was miles from the habitation of any human being, in the cold month of December, surrounded by howling, ravening wolves and greedy bears. Inferring from several chunks [extinguished firebrands] lying by a brook that some solitary traveler must have taken up his lodging here, and that there could be no house near, I turned my horse about and measured back my weary steps the rough and solitary way I came. And through the merciful providence of God I returned to the settlement and got a night's quarters at one Scott's, where I thought myself well off in getting a little Indian bread and butter for my supper. After some religious conversation, and prayer with the family, I lay down in a filthy cabin to take a little rest, after a day of hard toil. May the Lord enable me, with true Christian patience and magnanimity of soul, to endure all the hardships incident to traveling life among the hideous mountains before me!" The next day, being impatient, he says, "to see Dalytown, I set out without my breakfast. But, O perplexing! I missed my way again; and after traveling up a lofty mountain found the road wound around down the river, and it brought me in sight of the house I left. I then attempted to keep the river side, but this was impracticable, so I had to turn back again, glad

enough to get out of the narrows. This morning breakfasted on a frozen turnip. I called at a house, wanting something for me and my horse; but the uncomfortable reply, 'No bread,' again was heard. However, here I got something for my horse, and at a house a little distance off I got something for my almost half starved self at the moderate price of a fivepenny bit. So strengthened and refreshed, I crossed a towering mountain to Dalytown, that long desired place. But how am I mistaken! Instead of finding a tavern here, where man and horse might be refreshed, the ideal Dalytown vanished, and the real one—a smoky log-cabin or two—heaved in view. I lodged at old Mr. Jones's. The old man I met by the way; the old woman and a girl were at home. I spent the evening very agreeably with them, reading the Life of John Haime. May I never murmur at a few hardships in such a work!"[17]

The next day he traveled on, sleeping at night in a wretched cabin, with his head "in the chimney-corner." On the following day he "set off," exclaiming, "It is really hard times with me. I had to sell one of Wesley's funeral sermons for sixpence that I should have had elevenpence for, to help pay my reckoning. I rode six miles before I got anything for my poor horse. At Wigdon's, at Meshoppen, I called for something for my horse, and some smoky, dirty corn was brought. But as for myself, I thought I would wait a little longer before I would eat in such a filthy place. I talked to the filthy woman, who was sitting over the ashes with three or four dirty children in the chimney-corner, about the salvation of her soul. She was kind; she took nothing for what I had; so I proceeded on my journey, and arrived at Gideon Baldwin's, the lowest [furthest south]

[17] Peck's Methodism, p. 41.

house on my Tioga Circuit. They received me kindly, and got me something to eat. I have traveled over hills and mountains without breakfast or dinner."

He had thus broken his way through about twenty-five miles, over mountain barriers, almost without food, to the mouth of the Wyalusing. He had now got fairly on his circuit, and bravely went through its labors and privations, fording streams, living on the poorest fare, preaching in cabins, sometimes with "part of the congregation drunk," at others "with children about him bawling louder than he could speak," and receiving, for the four months of his toil, "three dollars and fourteen cents." Ware reaches him ready to share his trials. "We rose early," writes Colbert, "and got into a boat at New Sheshequin, going down the river, which ran through the mountains at all points of the compass, till dark, when we stopped at a cabin by the river side. Here we could get no straw to sleep on; however, Brother Ware fixed himself on a chest, with a bunch of tow for his pillow, and I suppose thought himself well off. For my part, I had to get the hay out of the boat for my bed, part of which a passenger begged." "Though the life of a Methodist preacher is very laborious and fatiguing," he adds, "it is what I glory in!" Such are mere examples of the primitive itinerancy of Methodism in the wilderness; but through such struggles has come the prosperity of later years. The Church is now ineradicably planted throughout most of these valleys. Churches, schools, comfortable houses, all the blessings of advanced Christian civilization, enrich their romantic scenery; and from them have gone forth some of the ablest preachers of the denomination. Its most celebrated American pulpit orator, long a laborer in its institutions of learning, and a bishop in its Southern see

tion, received his first effective religious impressions at one of the humblest appointments of Colbert's Tioga Circuit.[18]

Colbert passed to the Wyoming Circuit, and had similar, if not as severe trials there. From Wyoming he went to Northumberland Circuit. The local Church historian says: "For several months he continued to pass regularly around 'Northumberland and Wyoming.' The Northumberland Circuit at this time seems to have embraced the whole country from the Susquehanna to the Alleghany Mountains, including the Bald Eagle and Juniata countries, Penn's Valley, Buffalo Valley, and the settlements on the West Branch, penetrating in the wilderness as far north as Loyalsocks. This was an ample field, but it was thoroughly explored by the hardy itinerant, who for his labor received little or nothing more of pecuniary compensation than simple sustenance. And the men who were engaged in this toilsome and self-denying work literally 'had no certain dwelling-place.' They no sooner had formed a few acquaintances than they were ordered to another field—a few 'rounds' only, and they were off, hundreds of miles, to some new and strange country."[19]

Asbury appreciated such men. From not only a sympathy with their sufferings, but a real relish for their heroic kind of life, he seemed ever anxious to get among them, and in 1793, as we have seen, he plunged into these Pennsylvania valleys on his northward tour, accompanied by some of the nearest preachers on his route. Colbert exulted in the visit, "very much rejoiced to see four preachers in this part of the world."

[18] Bishop Bascom. The place was called "Captain Clark's," and was at "Old Sheshequin."

[19] Peck's Methodism, p. 56.

Only about five years had passed since Anning Owen, "the blacksmith" and itinerant preacher, had formed the first Methodist society of that region at Ross Hill, Wyoming. Methodism had fought its way steadily from valley to valley. One hundred and seventy-seven members had been reported, and two circuits organized and supplied with itinerants, who kept the trumpet of the Gospel sounding through all the mountains, though, as Asbury wrote to Morrell, from Wyoming, at this visit, "our poor preachers keep Lent a great part of the year here. Our towns and cities, at least our Conferences, ought not to let them starve." They saved much of the rude population of that early day, and prepared the way for the reception of new settlers, some of whom came from the older fields of Methodism, and were fitted to fortify the incipient Church. Thomas and Christian Bowman were examples. Both were local preachers; the first appeared in these regions in 1792, the second in 1793; and both kept a "prophet's chamber" for the itinerants, and opened their homes for preaching till they could build a chapel on their own land. They resided at "River Creek," on the Northumberland Circuit, a place "quite famous for Methodism," and whither Colbert always wended his way with delight. The itinerant, on his first visit, says he "preached in the woods to a few people who came out." A descendant of the Bowman family writes, "that Christian Bowman had moved into the neighborhood from Northampton County, Pa., four miles below the Water Gap on the Delaware, and, with his family, located at the place here mentioned. He arrived in April previous. It was almost an unbroken wilderness; he was one of the first pioneers. Here he erected a tent as a temporary shelter while preparing and gathering materials for the new

log-house. There was then no house or other building in which to preach, and Colbert's sermon, preached under the tent, was the first ever delivered in the neighborhood." Colbert was "a born pioneer;" he could not long remain in any one place. Thornton Fleming, a similar evangelist, came along through these yet obscure wildernesses as "elder," and bound on an evangelical exploration of the interior and western parts of New York, "the Lake country." Colbert hailed him with gladness, and they went onward rejoicing and preaching together. Colbert thus becomes transferred temporarily to a new scene, and we can trace him for some time founding societies in that beautiful and flourishing region, now the garden of both the state and the Church, but then dotted with a few settlements "scattered through the wilderness, the hardy settlers sharing the country with the aboriginal inhabitants." He gives us glimpses of the country, which are now surprising. "By the time I rode from Geneva to the ferry on Cayuga Lake I was very hungry. I stopped at the house on the west side of the lake and asked for something to eat, but they told me they had no bread. A pot of potatoes being on the fire, I was glad to get some of them. But, to my great satisfaction, while I was sitting by the potato pot a man came in with a bag of wheat flour on his back. I now procured some bread to eat, and some to take with me, and it was well I did, for when I crossed the lake to Captain Harris's, where I lodged, and took supper, they had no bread." "So it was then," adds the chronicler, "in a country where the people now live on the finest of the wheat, and all have an abundance. In 1793 bread was scarce, and in some cases not to be obtained." Colbert returned; but in the year 1794 we find Fleming commanding a district

with two long circuits, called Seneca and Tioga. Nova Scotia, with its corps of eight preachers, is also named as pertaining to his district; but the relation of that distant province to it could have been only nominal.

Another notable itinerant appears in this field in 1794 and 1795, Valentine Cook, whom we shall soon hail again in the far West. While Asbury was passing through these valleys he wrote to Morrell that he "had found a vast body of Dutch there," and wished him to dispatch Cook to them, because he could preach in their language. Cook appeared upon the scene, in Wyoming, in the stormy month of December, 1793, while Colbert retreated to his former field on the Western Shore of Maryland, but to return again in due time. Colbert had spent about a year in sounding the alarm through most of the vast territory comprised within Tioga, Wyoming, Northumberland, and the lakes, "with the greatest zeal and diligence." His success was not satisfactory to him; but the Methodists of our day, in all these prosperous valleys, should gratefully commemorate him as their chief founder. "His seemed to be the work of preparing the way, others entered into his labors." [20]

Valentine Cook now went over the country rousing all its settlements. He was one of the wonders of the primitive Methodist ministry. He was born among the western mountains of Virginia, in the "Greenbriar Country," now Monroe County, about 1765, became a famous hunter, but, having a mind of unusual vigor, devoted himself to study, as far as his local means would admit, and acquired the Greek and Latin languages, and such a knowledge of the German as to

[20] Peck, p. 72.

speak and preach in it with great fluency. A Methodist itinerant reached the mountains, and young Cook was converted. His father violently opposed him, but he at last prevailed, and introduced family worship into the cabin. Cokesbury College had been opened, and, by the aid of his reconciled father, he made his way thither in 1786, and studied diligently between one and two years. "The habits," says his biographer, "which he there formed were never abandoned. He continued to prosecute his literary, scientific, and theological studies, amid all the changes and vicissitudes to which he was subjected throughout the whole period of his subsequent life."[21]

In 1788 he joined the itinerant ministry, and traveled extensive circuits in Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania, until 1793. In 1794 and 1795 he had charge of the Philadelphia District. In 1796 and 1797 he was appointed to the Pittsburgh District. In 1798 he was sent as a missionary to Kentucky. Few men of his day had more power in the pulpit. A godless hearer remarked, "that he could listen to the Rev. Mr. —— all day, and sleep soundly all the following night;" but added, "I never get a comfortable night's rest for at least a month after hearing Valentine Cook preach one sermon. He always says something that I can't forget." He was once preaching on the words, "Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with a stroke; then a great ransom cannot deliver thee," when a hearer arose in the congregation, and exclaimed, under great excitement, "Stop! stop till I can get out of this place!" Cook immediately paused, and said, "Let us pray for that man." The man started from

[21] Biographical Sketch of Rev. Valentine Cook, A. M., by Rev. Dr. Stevenson, p. 20. Nashville, 1858.

his place, but "just as he reached the outskirts of the assembly he sank to the earth, and began to cry aloud for mercy." Valentine Cook literally preached the Gospel "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." The historian of Methodism in these wildernesses of Pennsylvania and New York, says, "he had the reputation of a man of learning, and no one doubted that he was a man of decided talents. His sermons took the citadel of the heart by storm. The people in multitudes flocked to hear him, and the power of God attended his preaching in a wonderful manner. When the writer first came to Wyoming, in 1818, there were many people scattered through the circuit who were converted by his instrumentality, and who regarded him as almost an angel. There are still lingering a number who remember him well, although most of them were mere children when his powerful voice echoed among the valleys and mountains of Northern Pennsylvania and Southern New York. Among the anecdotes which we recollect to have heard of the effects of his powerful sermons, was one concerning a certain Presbyterian deacon. The deacon went out with the multitude to hear the great Methodist preacher. He preached in a grove, and the mass of people waved and fell before his tremendous oratory like the trees of the forest before a terrible tempest. The good deacon began to feel nervous; he thought he would fly, but found his limbs not strong enough to carry him away. He held up by a tree until the excitement had in a manner subsided, and then returned home, resolved fully never to put himself in the way of such strange influences again. 'Why,' said he to his good wife, 'if I had undertaken to get away I should certainly have fallen my whole length on the

ground.' Under the impression, or pretending to be, that a sort of charm or witchery attended Cook's preaching, he could never be prevailed upon to hear him again."[22]

Methodism extended rapidly, under the labors of such men, among the new settlements east of the Cayuga, and between the Cayuga and Seneca Lakes. A circuit was this year formed, called after the latter. In the present day, with the hardly surpassed improvements and intercommunications of this part of New York, we can hardly credit the Methodistic traditions of those early times: the poor fare of the preachers, the hard struggles of the infant societies, the long journeys through forests and over streams and mountains (sometimes on foot for twenty-five or thirty miles) to hear Colbert, Cook, Fleming, Brodhead, Turck, Smith, and other itinerants at quarterly meetings, and the vast sensation which spread out from these occasions over the new country, stirring up the scattered population to favor or hostility. A letter from Cook to James Smith, one of his preachers, remains, in which he says: "I have now walked near sixty or seventy miles, and am within ten miles of the head of the lakes, at Mr. Weiburn's, who, I somewhat expect, will lend me a beast, as I am obliged to leave my horse with but small hopes of his recovery. Yesterday I walked upward of thirty miles in mud and water, being wet all day without; yet heaven was within. Glory to God! I had three tempters to encounter, the devil, the mosquitoes, and my horse; and the rain and my wet clothes were my element, and God my comforter, and victory my white horse. Hitherto, O Lord, hast thou been my helper, and I trust thou wilt save to the end. Brother

[22] Peck, p. 72.

Fleming is to take my appointments through Tioga. I mean to overtake him if possible, and get him to attend the quarterly meetings downward in my stead, and so return to the Lakes Circuit in a few weeks, all which I shall have to do afoot if I can't get a horse. You can fix your circuit as you think best, but only appoint for yourself till I come myself, or send one. If Brother Fleming's horse should not be recovered I shall have to go on. My trials are furious, but I am not discouraged." Our local authority says that "his fervent prayers, his powerful sermons, his great meekness and charity, and his profound knowledge of men and things, carried a mighty influence, and made deep and abiding impressions. All felt that a great man had made his appearance in the humble garb of a Methodist preacher. His work was to save souls. He took no reward for his services; his friends at the South replenished his wardrobe as occasion required. Having completed his three years of hard work among the mountains and valleys of the wild Susquehanna and the northern lakes, he recrossed the Alleghanies." [23]

In 1796 he took his leave of the country in a farewell sermon, at a quarterly meeting in Wyoming Valley. It was one of his great occasions. His text was Acts xx, from the 17th verse to the close of the chapter. One of his hearers pronounced the discourse "the most wonderful sermon he had ever heard." "All were melted down, and sighs, groans, and sobs filled the house. The people wept, the preacher wept; and after the sermon a hearty squeeze of the hand of the man of God, with a convulsive utterance of 'Farewell,' was responded to in a most dignified, affectionate manner by the preacher. 'Farewell, brother, farewell, sister·

[23] Peck, p. 89.

God bless you; be faithful; we shall meet in heaven.' The text was applicable. He left, and they of the valley saw his face no more."

The Minutes of 1796 reported three circuits in this westernmost region of the Northern Methodist field: Wyoming with two hundred and twenty-one members, Tioga with one hundred and thirty-eight, Seneca with two hundred and fifteen. It was yet "the day of small things;" the Church was feeble but the country was new. Methodism was securing and breaking up the fallow ground, and to day we witness the growth of both the Church and the country, "shaking like Lebanon."

The denomination extended into many new parts of these Middle States during the present period. The migration of Methodist families, especially of local preachers, founded it in many communities which it had not before reached. The itinerants were incessantly ramifying their circuits to new appointments. In the principal cities it was full of vigor. Philadelphia had reported, in 1792, but three hundred and twenty-eight members; in 1796 it reported five hundred and forty-four. New York had advanced from six hundred and forty-one to seven hundred and eighty-six. Its second or Forsyth-street Church was thronged, and it was already projecting a third, on Duane-street, which was begun in 1797. Little impression had been made on Albany, but it was surrounded by Methodist labors, and was the head of a circuit which reported three hundred and thirty-seven members. Garrettson had dedicated, in 1791, a small church, about thirty-two by forty-four feet, in the city, on the corner of Orange and Pearl streets, but it did not become a station till 1798. Meanwhile ministerial explorations were going on in all

the more northern regions. One of the explorers, Richard Jacobs, sacrificed his life, in his mission, in 1796. He belonged to a wealthy congregational family, of Berkshire County, Massachusetts, which had cast him out and disinherited him at his conversion to Methodism. "With his young wife he was thrown penniless upon the world." He joined Garrettson's famous young band of northern pioneers, and, in 1796, left his family at Clifton Park, to make an expedition as far as Essex and Clinton Counties, proclaiming the Gospel among the scattered settlers of that remote region. Many were awakened and converted at Elizabethtown, and, promising them a pastor, he pushed along the western shore of Lake Champlain, preaching as he went, till, joined by a lay companion, he proposed to make his way back to his family, through the Schroon woods to the head of Lake George. For about seven days the two travelers were engulfed in the forests, suffering fearful privations, and struggling against almost insurmountable obstructions. "Their provisions failed; they were exhausted with fatigue and hunger; and, at last, in trying to ford the Schroon River, Jacobs sunk beneath the water and was drowned. All his family," adds the narrator of the sad event, "were converted, three of his sons became ministers, and two of his daughters married Methodist preachers."[24]

There were about forty Methodists in the village of Brooklyn, the germ of a rich harvest; and there were now about 350 on Long Island. Methodism was extending from town to town on this beautiful island. It was introduced, in 1795, into Southhold in a manner so singular that tradition still commemorates the event as a "special providence." A devoted Methodist woman,

[24] Parks's "Troy Conference Miscellany," p. 35.

by the name of Moore, had removed thither from New York city, and, having no satisfactory means of grace, united with two other ladies to meet on Monday evenings and pray, especially that a faithful minister might be sent to them. On her knees, with this supplication, far into the night, the solitary Methodist felt that she received an answer, which seemed to say, "I have heard their cry and have come down to deliver them." She arose with the assurance that He who had taught her to pray for daily bread, had heard this infinitely more important call. At this very time Wilson Lee, whom we have seen heralding the truth in the middle, southern, and western states, had conveyed his trunks on board a vessel at New London, Conn., for New York. He had completed a successful preaching tour in New England, but contrary winds detained him. It is recorded that on the night of Mrs. Moore's prayer he felt an unusual agitation of mind, and a strong impression that he should hasten to Long Island and proclaim his message there. He could not banish this suggestion. He found the next morning a vessel at the wharf about to leave for Southhold, and immediately departed in it. He knew no one in the place, but on arriving and making inquiry he was directed to Mrs. Moore's house. She had never seen him, but readily recognized him, by his appearance, as a Methodist preacher, and invited him with the welcome, "Thou blessed of the Lord, come in." "They mutually explained the circumstances which have been briefly related, and rejoiced with exceeding great joy. A congregation was gathered, and Lee preached to them with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. A class was soon formed, and Methodism was planted there, and has continued until this day. There was something

very singular in all this."[22] From the labors of good Captain Webb to the present time, Methodism has found a fertile soil on Long Island, yielding in our day a harvest of 15,000 members, with 60 pastors.

At the close of the present period there were in the Middle States more than 11,600 Methodists. Delaware reported 2,228; Pennsylvania, 3,011; New Jersey, 2,351; New York, 4,044.

[22] Wakeley's Lost Chapters, p. 406. Bangs also relates the incident in his History of the Church.

CHAPTER VI.

METHODISM IN THE NORTH, CONTINUED: CANADA, 1792–1796.

The Emburys and Hecks in Canada — Dunham and Losee — Dunham's Life and Character — Examples of his Sarcasm — First Quarterly Meeting — Paul Heck's Death — Methodism takes precedence of the English Church in the Province — Romantic Close of Losee's Ministry — Final Traces of him — James Coleman enters Canada — Sketch of him — Elijah Woolsey — His early Trials — His Adventurous Passage to Canada — Sufferings and Successes there — Sylvanus Keeler — The First Native Methodist Preacher in Canada — Reminiscences of him — Woolsey's Labors and Death — Samuel Coate — His Eccentricities and Fall — Hezekiah C. Wooster's Extraordinary Power — Lorenzo Dow — Wooster's Death — Success in Canada — Statistical Strength of Middle and Northern Methodism.

Meanwhile the struggling cause was advancing in still more northern fields. We have seen its providential introduction into Canada. John Lawrence, a devoted Methodist, who accompanied Embury from Ireland, and was one of the five persons in his first congregation in New York, married his widow, and with the Hecks, and others of the society at Ashgrove, left the United States, at the breaking out of the Revolutionary war, for Lower Canada, where they remained (mostly in Montreal) about eleven years. In 1785 they again journeyed into the wilderness and settled on "Lot number four, third Concession," of what is now the town of Augusta, in Upper Canada. Here their peculiar work, their providential mission, as I have ventured to call it, was resumed. They were still pioneers and founders of Methodism; and in the house of John and Catharine Lawrence (the widow of Embury) was organized the

first "class" of Augusta, and Samuel Embury, the son of Philip, was its first leader. Paul and Barbara Heck were among its first members, and their three sons were also recorded on its roll. They were thus to anticipate and, in part, prepare the way for the Methodist itinerancy in Canada, as they had at New York city and in Northern New York; for William Losee, the first regular Methodist preacher in the province, did not enter it, as has been shown, till 1790. The germ of Canadian Methodism was planted by these memorable families five or six years before Losee's arrival.[1]

We have traced the subsequent progress of the denomination, in Canada, through the labors of Tuppey, Neal, M'Carty, Lyons, and Losee, down to 1792. Losee, not being an elder, was accompanied to the province in the latter year by Darius Dunham, who was competent to administer the sacraments. Dunham had been educated as a physician, but had abandoned his professional hopes for the life of an apostle. He joined the itinerancy in 1788, and was enrolled among Garrettson's little corps on the Upper Hudson. He was appointed to Shoreham, on the Vermont side of Lake Champlain. There was no such circuit at the time; but the youthful itinerant was sent out to form one, a not unfrequent fact in those days. In 1789 he was on Cambridge Circuit, which brought him into communication with Losee, who was traveling the adjacent circuit, and probably led him, at last, to accompany his fellow-laborer to Canada. He remained in the same appointment in 1790, and was ordained

[1] "It may be certainly reckoned the *first Methodist class* in Canada."—PLAYTER. See "Women of Methodism," where I correct some typographical and other errors which escaped in the account of Canada in my second volume.

deacon. In these two years he gathered into the Church nearly a hundred and fifty members. In 1791 he was still retained in the North, traveling Columbia Circuit. In 1792 he was ordained elder, and set out with Losee to the northwestern wilds. He was energetic in body, resolute in will, tenacious of his opinions, enthusiastic in zeal, and had "the greatest bass voice the people had ever heard," no unimportant qualification for that borean region. He was quite indifferent to the censures of opposers, rebuked sternly the vices of the settlers, and was soon in "high repute" among them.[2] He worked mightily in this hard field, the difficulties of which he continued to brave, most of the time as presiding elder, down to 1800, when he located, through domestic necessities, and settled on the Bay of Quinte as a physician, but continued to preach till the end of his life. He "was a character: a man of small stature, but full of vigor, compact, formidable, with coarse, bushy eyebrows," and a tremendous voice, which often sent trembling through his rude congregations. He was ready in discourse, but singularly blunt and direct, sometimes scathingly sarcastic, especially to self-conceited critics or opponents. He preached much upon cleanliness, endeavoring to reform the negligent habits of the frontier settlers. "It was in the Bay of Quinte country," says our local authority, "where he lived so long as a located as well as traveling preacher, that the greatest number of characteristic anecdotes are related of Dunham. His reply to a magistrate is well known. A new-made 'squire' bantered him before some company about riding so fine a horse, and told him he was very unlike his humble Master, who was content to ride on an ass

[2] Playter, p. 41.

Dunham responded with his usual imperturbable gravity, and in his usual heavy and measured tones, that he agreed with him perfectly, and that he would most assuredly imitate his Master in the particular mentioned only for the difficulty of finding the animal required, the government having 'made up all the asses into magistrates!' A person of my acquaintance informed me that he saw an infidel, who was a fallen Lutheran clergyman, endeavoring one night, while Dunham was preaching, to destroy the effect of the sermon on those around him by turning the whole into ridicule. The preacher affected not to notice him for a length of time, but went on extolling the excellency of Christianity, and showing the formidable opposition it had overcome, when all at once he turned to the spot where the scoffer sat, and, fixing his eyes upon him, the old man continued, 'Shall Christianity and her votaries, after having passed through fire and water, after vanquishing the opposition of philosophers and priests and kings, after all this, I say, shall the servants of God, at this time of day, allow themselves to be frightened by the braying of an ass?' The infidel, who had begun to show signs of uneasiness from the time the fearless servant of God fixed his terribly searching eye upon him, when he came to the climax of the interrogation was completely broken down, and dropped his head in evident confusion."

He had once a providential escape from death. He had aroused the anger of an ungodly man, whose wife had been converted under his ministry. "The husband came to the house where he lodged before he was up in the morning and inquired for him. The preacher made his appearance, partly dressed, when the infuriated man made toward him, and would have killed

him with an ax with which he had armed himself, had it not been for the prompt intervention of his host and hostess, who succeeded in disarming the assailant. Dunham's calm and Christian fidelity, with the blessing of God, moreover, brought the man to reason, to penitence, and to prayer at once, and issued in his conversion. His wife was no longer persecuted, and his house became 'a lodging place for wayfaring men.'"[3]

Methodism thus sent hardy and brave men to its frontier conflicts, men whose characteristics had much in common with those of the rude population. Both Losee and Dunham were naturally fitted for this pioneer work.

The two evangelists arrived together, and, before parting, held the first quarterly meeting of the province. Notice of the occasion was spread through the six townships of Losee's new circuit, and "on Saturday, September 15, 1792, might have been seen, in Mr. Parrot's barn, first Concession of Ernestown, the first Saturday congregation, the first Church business meeting, and the first circuit prayer-meeting. Darius Dunham, preacher in charge of the circuit, acted in the place of the presiding elder." On Sunday the people, gathered from afar, witnessed the first provincial love-feast, in which they welcomed their two missionaries, breaking bread together with joyful hearts. "After the love-feast the Methodists see the broken bread and the cup, for the first time, in the hands of a Methodist preacher, who earnestly invites them to draw near and partake of the holy sacrament to their comfort. A new and solemn ordinance to them; and then after the members have retired for a few minutes, behold a crowd of people pressing into the barn, filling it, and a great number

[3] Carroll's "Past and Present," pp. 172, 175.

around the doors." The itinerants avail themselves of the popular interest, and close the meeting with repeated proclamations of the Gospel, making "a memorable day to the people of the Bay of Quinte, the first Methodist quarterly meeting held in Canada."

Losee's circuit included Augusta, the scene of the first class of the province, formed by the Emburys and Hecks. Barbara Heck still survived to receive him, pondering her old German Bible in these forests, and waiting for the salvation of the people. Her husband, Paul Heck, died there this year, a "faithful servant of the Lord," an "upright, honest man, whose word was as good as his bond."[4]

Methodism was now completely organized in the province, with three circuits, "classes," "societies," the sacraments, and all other essential provisions of a Church. It was under the jurisdiction of the General Conference, and the episcopal administration of Asbury. The denomination thus took actual precedence of the English Church there, as it had of the organization of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States. It was not till 1793 that the British government, reserving one seventh of the lands of Canada for an ecclesiastical endowment, sent out Dr. Mountain as bishop of Quebec, with spiritual jurisdiction over the province. He found but three or four clergymen of his Church[5] dispersed through the immense territory. One of his episcopal successors says that "the western part of the diocese presented a dreary waste. The people were scattered over a vast surface, and had the means been furnished of building churches and schools, there was little or no chance of their being supported. In new

[4] Playter, p. 34, and letter of Rev. John Carroll, Canada, to the author.

[5] Playter, p. 40.

settlements families live of necessity far apart; they are for some years so wretchedly poor that they cannot dispense with the services of their children who are able to work, and if a church is erected, the families are for a long time too remote, and the roads too bad to attend. Settlers in a wilderness are often found greatly changed in a few years. Living without restraint, and without the eye of those whom they respect, a sense of decency and religion frequently disappears. Here the disinclination to holy things presents itself in all its deformity, a distaste for divine worship, and neglect of everything sacred, and a total estrangement from God; and although, from their situation, crimes against society are few, the heart becomes entirely dead to true piety and virtue."[6] It devolved upon Methodism, as precedent in the field, in an organized form, to meet most effectually this exigent condition of the country. Its peculiar ecclesiastical apparatus fitted it to do so, and it has ever since been outspeeding the establishment in the reformation and moral nurture of the people.

The two itinerants had hard work, and many perils, especially from the severity of the climate; but they preached and traveled sturdily. They could not neglect their urgent work to attend the distant Annual Conference, but they sent returns of three hundred and forty-nine members. Dunham had gained ninety-four, Losee ninety where none had before been reported; extraordinary success for so dispersed and demoralized a population.

No appointments appear in the Minutes for 1793; doubtless a clerical omission, as the returns of members are given. Durham remained and took charge of both circuits. Losee disappeared forever from the Minutes.

[6] Rev. Dr. Strachan's Funeral Sermon on Bishop Mountain, 1825.

It has been supposed that, broken down by labor and ill health, he located.[7] We have intimations, however, of a sadder, though more romantic cause of his sudden retirement. The powerful man, hardly yet thirty years old, whom no labor or hostility could daunt, had an extremely sensitive soul. "In the family of one of his hearers, near the Napanee River, where he formed his third society, was a maid of no little moral and personal attraction." He chose her for his wife, but before he could obtain her hand another suitor stepped in and bore her away, and with her the fondest earthly hope of his life. The strong man bowed under the burden of his grief, and was broken in both heart and intellect. He remained in the province till the summer of 1794, and then returned to the states hopelessly disqualified for his work, and his brethren quietly dropped his name from the list of appointments. It was an anomalous case among them; they had no technical designation, no precedent for it.[8] It is not certain that his shaken intellect ever recovered its balance, but we meet occasional allusions to him in our early books, as an eccentric but faithful Methodist, on Long Island. In 1816 he suddenly reappeared among his old friends in Canada "for the last time. He came," says its Methodist historian, "to dispose of his property in Kingston. He was now a feeble old man, with spare features and his withered arm, but still walking in the way of the Lord. He preached in the chapel, and also in some places on the Bay of Quinte. His under jaw in speaking would fall a little, so that it was tied up while preaching. He would yet

[7] Bangs (Alphabetic Catalogue, vol. 4, App.) records him as located in 1793; but he does not so appear in the Minutes, nor do we ever again find him on their record.

[8] Playter's History of Methodism in Canada, p. 42.

ride on horseback, resting his weight on the stirrups, and as he rode, he balanced himself with his one arm, his body violently shaking."

More than a quarter of a century after his affliction in Canada, a preacher traveling over Long Island writes: "On Christmas eve I preached at Carman Rushmore's, from the words of Moses, Deut. xviii, 15. At this place I met with Father Losee, an old-fashioned Methodist preacher. He was confined to his bed with a broken leg, and I preached in the room where he lay. After sermon the old gentleman raised himself up in the bed, and gave a word of exhortation. He was exceedingly deaf, and perhaps could not hear himself, unless he raised his voice to the highest pitch, and as I had not raised mine much in preaching, he seemed, as I then thought, disposed to show me how it ought to be done. With a lion-like voice he declaimed against the vices and follies of mankind, and denounced all the workers of iniquity in no very soothing terms. I had never heard an old-fashioned Methodist preacher exhort, and I really almost trembled under the sound of his voice. Had St. Paul spoken as loud when he addressed the people at Miletus, I am inclined to think that Eutychus would not have fallen into so deep a sleep as he did."[9] The primitive fire evidently glowed still in the shattered old man. Many a tradition lingers yet in Canada of the power of his exhortations, especially of his rebukes to gross sinners. A hardened opponent endeavored to interrupt the worship of one of his congregations, when he singled him out from the throng and poured upon him the blast of his clarion like voice. "On which the power of God struck him to the floor, where he lay several hours struggling in con-

[9] Rev. Geo. Coles's "Seven Years in America," p. 32.

vulsive agony; and did not rise till he rejoiced in the God of his salvation. And although he was a young man of no education, he continued steadfast till the end of a long life; was always characterized by unusual zeal in the service of his Master, and became mighty in prayer and exhortation." The reclaimed young man was long afterward known "to hundreds in Matilda and the neighboring townships," as Joseph Brouse, a faithful representative of primitive Methodism.[10]

If he did not fully recover his mind, he at least so far recovered his heart as to marry into the family of the Rushmores, (a name honorable in Methodism,) and enjoying a comfortable, though infirm old age, died in peace, and sleeps in the burial ground of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Hempstead, Long Island. Such are our few last traces of this first itinerant and chief founder of Methodism in Canada. When we remind ourselves of the subsequent growth of the denomination through all that important country, its actual predominance, and prospective history, as the leading religious community among a people evidently destined to be one of the most prosperous and powerful of the continent, it may not be a mere fancy if we venture to predict a time when this heroic but afflicted veteran will be commemorated there with that veneration with which some of the lowliest men have been honored in ecclesiastical history, by whole peoples or great states, as their apostles or religious founders.

In 1794 Dunham was appointed the first presiding elder of Canada, and two young itinerant recruits, James Coleman and Elijah Woolsey, hastened to his solitary standard.

James Coleman was born in Black River township,

[10] Rev. John Carroll's "Past and Present," p. 171.

N. J., October 30, 1766. In 1777 he removed with his parents across the Alleghanies, and settled on the Monongahela River. This was then a remote region, quite beyond the religious provisions of the times. He grew up, therefore, in ignorance and vice. According to his own statements, his religious knowledge was exceedingly deficient, consisting in little more than some general ideas of the providence of God and the doctrine of Predestination, derived from his parents, who had been members of the Presbyterian Church. Young Coleman heard the itinerant evangelists who first reached that frontier; he was awakened and converted, but through persecutions and the lack of more regular means of grace, he lost his religious peace. Anxious for something to appease his conscience he returned to his former habits, and comforted himself with the persuasion that he was one of God's elect, and therefore secure, whatever might be the moral character of his life; the result was, increased carelessness, and, at last, habits of dissipation. God had, however, an important work for him, and did not abandon him utterly; he was afflicted with dangerous illness, reclaimed from his vices, and soon afterward joined the Methodists. He was licensed as an exhorter, and felt that a dispensation of the gospel was committed to him. About this time he was drafted to serve in a war with the Indians, but believing that he was called to a higher warfare, he refused to comply, and meantime was licensed to preach. On informing his captain of his determination, he was told that "he might go and preach in the army;" subsequently, an officer and several men were sent to seize him. They found him preaching, and were so affected by his word that they left him without further molestation. In 1791 he joined the itinerant ranks, and was appointed colleague of

Daniel Fidler, on Redstone Circuit.[11] The next year he was sent to New England, and traveled Litchfield Circuit; and in 1793 that of Fairfield. The following year he passes, with one of those transitions which were characteristic of the itinerancy at that date, to Upper Canada. His labors, privations, and perils there were such as fell to the lot of but few, even of the itinerants of that day.[12] He continued in the new and laborious field till 1800, when he returned to New England, and labored on Middletown Circuit, Conn. He subsequently traveled Fletcher, Vt.; Redding, Conn.; Duchess, N. Y.; New Rochelle, N. Y.; Long Island; Croton, N. Y.; Newburgh, N. Y.; and New Windsor, N. Y., Circuits till 1810, when he was returned supernumerary. But the next year he re-entered the effective service, and was appointed to Litchfield Circuit, Conn., which he traveled during two years, and then passed to Stratford, Conn. In 1814 his name was entered on the "superannuated" list of the New York Conference, where it continued till 1821, when he again traveled Stratford Circuit. The next year he was among the "supernumeraries," but had charge of Ridgefield Circuit, Conn. In the following year he entered the lists of the "superannuated, or worn-out" preachers, and continued there the remainder of his life, which terminated at Ridgefield, Fairfield County, Conn., on the 4th day of February, 1842, in the seventy-sixth year of his age. His labors were energetic and successful. On his route to, and in his travels in Canada, he surmounted the severest hardships. Once, while passing up the Mohawk River in company with two others, he was obliged to go on shore fifteen nights in succession, and kindle a

[11] Not "Ohio," as the obituary in the Minutes of 1841–42 states.
[12] See "Woolsey's Supernumerary," etc.

fire to keep off the wild beasts; and his food failing, he was reduced to a single cracker per day. Yet such was his zeal that no privations or difficulties could arrest him or even damp his ardor. "Though his abilities were not great," say his brethren, "yet such was the peculiar impression that attended his prayers, so entirely was he a man of one business, that no inconsiderable success attended his efforts, and his crown in heaven is set with many stars, and some of the first magnitude." [13]

Elijah Woolsey, Coleman's companion, was born in 1772.[14] The Methodist itinerants came to the locality where he spent his youth, and stopped at his father's house; on leaving they "used to take us," he says, "by the hand, and exhort us to seek the Lord; this affected me much." A beloved sister was converted and became a Methodist. "Her exemplary life," he writes, "frequently awakened me to a sense of my duty. Sometimes I used to find her in the woods on her knees at the break of day. I used to say to myself, 'She is now conversing with her God; but, alas for me, I am a poor sinner!' I never attended the preaching of the Methodists, except the first time, without feeling conviction, and I must say that no preaching seemed to me like theirs." He was soon himself a converted man and an ardent Methodist, holding meetings and exhorting zealously among his neighbors. In 1792 he and his brother began to itinerate under Garrettson. He was immediately initiated into the stern work of the ministry. "In my new circuit," he says, "I met with hard fare and many trials. The country was thinly inhabited. In some places there were no regular roads. We followed marked trees for eight or nine

[13] Minutes of 1841–42.

[14] "The Supernumerary," p. 5; he does not say where.

miles together. Provisions were scarce, and of the homeliest kind. In some instances our greatest luxuries were roasted potatoes. But, thank God! we did not stay long at each place. Our appointments for preaching were numerous, and the distances between them very considerable. Sometimes I had no bed to lie on, nor blanket to cover me in the coldest weather. My saddle-bags were my pillow, and my greatcoat my 'comfortable.' The consequence was repeated and violent colds, which laid the foundation for those infirmities which have for the last two years made me 'a supernumerary.' Notwithstanding, however, the hard toils and the hard fare of my first winter's appointment, I saw good times in another respect, and formed some new classes within the bounds of the circuit, and added to the Church eighty-eight hopeful members." In 1793 he was received on probation by the conference, and at its next session joined Dunham and Coleman for Canada. We are indebted to him for our only record of the adventurous expedition, presenting a curious contrast with modern travel through the same region, now hardly rivaled on the face of the earth in the convenience of its internal communications. They set out immediately after the Conference by the way of Albany and Schenectady. At Albany they laid in their provisions for the journey. When they came to Schenectady they found that the company with whom they had intended to go had already departed; so they tarried a week, and provided themselves with a boat. They had to work their own passage. "When we came to the first rapids," says Woolsey, "which by the Dutch people are called 'knock 'em stiff,' we had our difficulties. I had never used the setting pole in my life, and my colleague, Coleman, was not a very good waterman. When we had

almost ascended the rapids the boat turned round, and down the stream she went, much more rapidly than she went up. We tried again, and when we had almost conquered the difficulty the boat turned again. I immediately jumped overboard, thinking to save it from going down stream; but the water was over my head. So away went the boat, with my companions in it, and I swam to shore. The next time we 'doubled the cape,' and that day made a voyage of ten miles. At night we brought up the boat, and made her fast to a tree. We then kindled a fire, put on the tea-kettle and the cooking-pot, boiled our potatoes, made our tea, and ate our supper with a good appetite and a clear conscience; and after smoking our pipes and chatting a while we sung and prayed, and then laid ourselves down among the sand and pebbles on the bank of the river to rest; but I was so wearied with the toils of the day that I could not sleep much that night." The next day, by dawn, they were again on the way, Dunham at the helm, Coleman and Woolsey at the oars; they made forty miles by sunset. "We put ashore," continues Woolsey, "as on the preceding night, collected leaves together, and made our couch as comfortable as we could, for we had no other place for that time whereon to lay our heads, being in some sense like the patriarch of old, when he was on his way to Padan-aram. Our toil by day made repose welcome at night, so that when the morning light appeared we were rather loath to leave our humble beds. The weather, however, warned us to depart. It became stormy by day, and much more so by night. We had rain and snow fifteen days out of nineteen during that journey. When we were going down the Oswego River two men hailed us from the shore, and desired to work their passage

about twenty miles. It was very stormy; I was very weary, and glad to rest a little; so we took them in, and I took the helm; but being warm with work, and then sitting still in the boat, I took a violent cold. Toward evening we saw a small log-house, and went to it. We found the woman sick in bed, and the man in poor health. They had three children, and but very little to eat. Here we lodged all night. I laid me down on the stones of the floor, which were very hard and uneven, but we kept a good fire all night, and I got into a perspiration, which relieved me of my cold a little, so that in the morning I felt much better than on the preceding night. Brother Dunham being a physician, administered some medicine to the woman, which greatly relieved her. She appeared to be pious, and had been a member of the Baptist Church, but said she had never seen a Methodist before. We had a very pleasant and edifying interview with the family, that evening, in religious conversation, singing, and prayer. When we discovered that they were so destitute of provisions, we divided our little stock, and shared with them of all that we had. They appeared equally surprised and thankful. They wished that we would tell any of our Methodist friends, who might have to travel that way, to be sure and call on them. They desired us also, if we ever came within forty miles of them, to be sure and go that distance at least out of our way to see them, telling us that we should be welcome to anything that the house or farm afforded. The house, however, was not likely to afford much, and there was scarcely anything on the farm but forest trees. This was the only time, during our journey of nineteen days, that we found a house to shelter us; and it was good for that family that they entertained the strangers. They must have suffered greatly had we

not called on them." This family became serviceable to the pilgrim evangelists and their associates in later times. "At night," continues the traveler, "I have often hunted for a stone or a stick for a pillow, and in the morning when I took hold of the oar or setting-pole I had to do it as gently as I could, by reason of the soreness of my hands, which were much blistered and bruised in rowing the boat. We attended to family worship both night and morning, although we slept in the woods, and the presence of the Lord was with us of a truth."

They reached the port of Oswego, on Lake Ontario, and prepared to launch out upon the great water. After working their way for twenty miles a furious storm arose, and they had to steer for "the Black River country." The "waves dashed terribly," and before they reached the shore they struck a rock, which split the boat. They were in peril, but escaped with the wetting of their books, their most precious treasure. When they went ashore they made a fire, dried their baggage, and mended the boat as well as they could. The next day they embarked again on the lake, but the wind was directly ahead, and compelled them to turn their course. They made for Salmon River, where they put in for that day; and early next morning started again, and pulled at the oars till daylight disappeared in the west. They went round Stony Point into Hungary Bay, and landed on Grenadier Island. When they struck the shore Woolsey sprang out of the boat and fell exhausted on the beach. "I never," he says, "knew rest to be so sweet before. But it would not do to sit still; therefore we kindled a fire, hung on the tea-kettle, cooked some victuals, ate our supper, attended family worship, and retired to rest. Our weariness invited repose, nor did the murmur of

the waves disturb our slumbers; and besides, we had that very necessary requisite to sound sleep recommended by Dr. Franklin, namely, *a good conscience.*" This island is in the mouth of Hungary Bay, and is subject to high winds. They were detained there until they were reduced to an allowance of bread, having only one biscuit a day. He would have given considerable, he says, for a piece of bread as big as his hand if he could have obtained it; but they were afraid of making too free with their little stock, lest it should not last until they could get from the island. They ate their last biscuit about the middle of the day they left the island, and got into harbor on the main land about eleven o'clock at night, where they put up at the house of their friend, Captain Parrott. He and his wife were members of the Church, and received them very kindly. She hastened to make supper ready, "but it was as much as I could do," adds Woolsey, "to keep my hands from the bread until all was ready. We took care not to eat too much that night, fearing it might not be so well for us. We retired to rest on feather beds, but it was a restless night to us all. Brother Coleman had a mind to leave the bed and take to the floor, but I told him we must get used to it; so he submitted. But our slumbers were not half so sweet as on the sandy beach and pebbled shore, when we were rocked by the wind, and lulled by the rippling wave."

Methodists of Canada may well rehearse the story of the self-sacrificing pioneers of the Gospel, who thus brought to their land those blessings of Christianity which have since rendered their country a garden of the Lord. The itinerants hastened to separate and proclaim their message through the scattered settlements– Dunham to Niagara Circuit, Coleman to

the Bay of Quinte, Woolsey to Oswegothe. They were too far apart to meet often; but they longed for such rare interviews and mutual support, and when they did occur they were high festivals. "The distance," says Woolsey, "was sixty or seventy miles, and a great part of the way I had to travel by the help of marked trees instead of roads. One day I was lost in the woods, and wandered about for some time, and being on foot I tore my clothes very much with the brushwood. But I got safely through at last, and our meeting was more joyful than if either of us had found a purse of gold."

The itinerants were received as angels from God by the people, so long destitute of the ordinances of religion. Woolsey, full of geniality and fervor, was especially "popular." Crowds gathered from great distances to his appointments, in houses and cabins, but he became alarmed under their plaudits, for no immediate fruit appeared. "My soul," he says, "was in great distress, for I feared lest it should be found that I had 'daubed with untempered mortar.' I wanted to have the people blessed, and wished that Brother Dunham would come and preach there, for the people flocked to hear, and I thought he might do them good. The more the people applauded the worse I felt." He studied and prayed to know the will of God respecting them, and at length concluded that he would preach in a more admonitory manner. He did so, and "when I closed my meeting," he writes, "my soul was full of peace, and I rejoiced in God my Saviour. I now felt happy that I had done my duty, and that if one half of the congregation were to oppose me, it would not disturb my peace." The next day he heard that the people were dissatisfied. One said, "He is not the man he used to be." Another said, "He now shows his cloven

foot;" and others that they would not hear him again. "But these things did not move me," he adds. "When I came there again, instead of my large and smiling congregation, I had about thirty hearers; but neither did this move me. Before preaching I went into a room by myself to pray. While thinking on what text I should preach, a passage of Scripture came to my mind, and such a field opened before me that I was almost lost to all things here below. When I began the meeting a young woman fell to the floor and soon after another cried out for mercy. I thought I must finish my sermon, but I might as well have preached to the walls, the cries of the mourners were so great; so I left my *pulpit*, which was nothing more than a chair, and went to the mourners, and prayed for them, and encouraged them to believe on the Lord Jesus." And thus did his faithfulness result in an extensive "revival." "We were favored," he says, "with good times on the circuit that year. In the second town I formed a class of seventeen members, mostly seekers; but when I came round again they had found peace to their souls. I also formed a class in the northeast part of the fourth town, of ten members, all mourners; and it was with them as Mr. Wesley once said, 'They were ripe for the gospel.' They thought that they must do everything the preacher said. So I told them they must pray, and on the Lord's day they must meet together and worship God as well as they could. They must repent, and believe, and God would bless them. They accordingly met together, read the Scriptures, and sung hymns with one another, but for some time no one dared to pray. At length one woman said she had as much reason to pray as any one there, and then added, 'Let us pray.' When she began,

they all began, and all found peace, except herself. Her husband said she was on her knees ten times on their way home, and when in sight of home she cried out, 'Lord, must I be the only one that goes home without a blessing? Bless me, even me, O my God!' She did not pray in vain; but though for a time she was seemingly refused an answer, the Lord at length spoke peace to her soul. She and her husband then went on their way rejoicing, and the little flock prospered greatly from this time forward as long as I continued with them."

It is by such incidents that we get a real, an interior view of the religious and frontier life of the country in these primitive times. The simple and grateful people prized their devoted pastors. Woolsey records touching instances of their affectionate gratitude. "When," he says, "the time came for me to leave the circuit, they were so afraid that they should be left without preaching, (inasmuch as the preachers that went to Canada volunteered,) that they offered their lands. One and another offered fifty acres, and so on, according to their abilities. I told them I did not come after their lands, but that they might depend on having preaching notwithstanding my removal. One man followed me down to the water side, and there we sat for some time, and talked and wept together; and when I got into the boat, he threw his arms around me, and waded knee-deep into the water, and said, 'If you will but come back again, as long as I have two mouthfuls of bread you shall have one.'" In his old age, recalling these scenes, he writes: "It was to me a source of inexpressible satisfaction that I had been made useful to a few of my fellow-creatures, though of another nation; and the thought of meeting them on

Canaan's happy shore, after the trials of life are over, and of greeting them as my spiritual children, often gilds the shadows of my supernumerary hours, and gives brilliancy to the rays of my descending sun."

At the close of the year the evangelists reported four hundred and eighty-three [15] members, omitting those of Woolsey's circuit, which are not recorded. They had now three circuits, and their communicants had increased more than one third since the returns of 1794. Sixty-five of the increase were in the Niagara region, probably the fruits of good Major Neal's labors, the first Methodist (local) preacher of Upper Canada, who, as we have seen, began to labor there as early as 1786. Dunham, though ostensibly a presiding elder of the whole field, in 1794, had really formed a circuit, on his return from the Conference with Coleman and Woolsey, and made it the chief scene of his labors.

The itinerants went rejoicing to the Conference of 1795, appointed to be held at New York city, but transferred to White Plains on account of the yellow fever. If their difficulties on the route were less than in the previous year, yet Woolsey suffered more, for his health had been broken. They started from the Bay of Quinte in a batteau. Woolsey had escaped for some days a severe attack of fever and ague, but the labor of rowing, and the night air, brought it back. They found shelter again, on the banks of the Oswego, at the cabin of the poor settler whose sick and nearly starving family they had relieved. The story of their entertainment there is a lesson to the prosperous husbandmen of that region in our day. "The woman said she was as glad to see us as she would have been to see her own father. They seemed to be doing well as to

[15] Playter errs in giving the number, p. 45.

the things of this world. The man had cleared some of his land, and planted corn and potatoes. They had also two or three cows. They kindly invited us to tarry a while, which we readily consented to do. We told them we had plenty of dry provisions, and asked the woman if she had any milk, and said we would be glad of a little. They had plenty of good milk, but that was not considered good enough by our generous hostess for the men who had visited them in their affliction, and had relieved them in their distresses, so she offered us cream; but we refused at first to eat of it, until her generosity overcame our scruples. Such was the gratitude of this family for the kindnes we had shown them on our way to Canada that it seemed as if they could never do enough to make us welcome. Had they been as rich as Abraham of old, I have no doubt they would have 'killed the fatted calf' for us, and 'baked cakes' for our entertainment, for they boiled of their potatoes and green corn for us, and laid heavy contributions upón the cucumbers and watermelons for our sakes, accounting nothing too good for us that was in their power to bestow. The good man went three or four miles up the river with us in order to help us up the rapids, and, when we parted, wished us every blessing.

They got through their journey in thirteen days, whereas in going to Canada they were nineteen; but before they had ascended the Oswego River Woolsey had the ague and fever every day, and when they came to Oneida Lake he was exhausted. His companions at length concluded to take him to the shore, where he could be in the shade. He fainted as they landed. On recovering his consciousness, "it seemed to me," he says, "as if I had just waked out of sleep. At one time I lay all night by the side of a fence, with a burning

fever raging in every vein, without any covering but my clothes, or canopy but the heavens, with not so much as Jonah's gourd to shelter me from the chilling dews, or pillow on which to recline my weary head. These were some of the 'shadows of itinerancy;' but they also have 'fled away.'"

They were refreshed at the Conference; the annual session was a jubilee in those days, and many a worn out itinerant, arriving at it impoverished and discouraged, received there a pittance of pecuniary help, was inspirited by the communion and chivalry of his fellow-sufferers, and went forth with renewed vows and courage. "We loved one another," says Woolsey, "and, while we were together, the Spirit of glory and of God rested upon us. We felt willing to live, to suffer, and to die together. If one had received a little more than his brother, he was willing to divide with him. We hoped to share the spoil together in a better world, when all our toils are over, and all our griefs are spent, and this hope was as an anchor to the soul amid all the tempests and billows with which we had to contend. When the appointments were read out the preachers appeared to receive them gladly. My appointment was to the Bay of Quinte Circuit. On our way to Canada we were met at Schenectady by some of our Canadian friends, who helped us on our way. We ascended the Mohawk in company with Captain Parrott, and got along without any difficulty until we came to the Oneida Lake." There they were driven by a terrible night storm, "the waves breaking over them with fury." "We are all dead men!" exclaimed their captain. "The Lord will provide," responded Woolsey, and the "good providence of God brought them safely through."

The little corps of evangelists had raised up a single recruit, Sylvanus Keeler, who appears with them in the Minutes this year (1795) as the colleague of Woolsey, on the Bay of Quinte Circuit. "He proved," says the Canadian chronicler of the Church, "a good and faithful minister of Christ." We trace him through about twelve years of hard itinerant labor on various circuits in the province, at the close of which he retires into the "local ranks," the fate of most of his ministerial brethren in those days of the poverty of the Church, when the necessities of their growing families compelled them to resort to other means of support, but seldom or never to abandon their Sabbath labors. Sylvanus Keeler retreated to a farm in Elizabethtown, near Brockville, where, and in the surrounding country, he continued to preach "all his days." He became a patriarch among the societies, his hair "wool-white, long, flowing down upon his shoulders;" his "voice deep, yet soft as the roll of thunder in the distance." He died in the faith. Another Canadian authority, familiar with the local Church antiquities, gives us a few further intimations about this veteran, whom our ecclesiastical literature has almost entirely ignored. The name, he says, of Sylvanus Keeler is worthy of being rescued from oblivion. He had no advantages of early education, and, when he first began speaking in public, it is said, could scarcely read a hymn; but, by assiduous efforts, he so far surmounted this defect as to become possessed of tolerable attainments in English. He had, moreover, endowments, natural, and of divine bestowment, which went far to counterbalance his deficiencies. His person was commanding, and even handsome. His voice, for speaking at least, if not for singing also, was excellent. It was clear, melodious, and strong. The

distance at which the old people say he could be heard was marvelous. His spirit and manners, too, were the most bland and engaging, and his zeal and fervor knew no bounds, and suffered no abatement. He traveled for several years while Canada was yet new and poor, and the preachers were little provided for. He was often three months at a time from his wife and family of small children. The story of their destitution, and the em barrassments they endured in those times of destitution, might bring tears from eyes 'the most unused to weep.' No wonder that his return to them was always considered a jubilee. When the season of his periodical visit drew near, his little ones would mount the fence and strain their eyes to get the first glimpse of their returning father, often for hours, and even days, before his appearance. In view of such privations, could any one blame him for 'locating,' and making provision for those for whom he was the natural provider? But he did not cease to be useful when he ceased to itinerate. He was greatly beloved and respected by the people in the surrounding neighborhoods, and made very instrumental of good to them. And after his family grew up, and were able to provide for themselves, "Father Keeler," as he was now called, extended his labors to greater distances from home, carrying the Gospel into the destitute settlements of immigrants beyond the Rideau. His last public labor was in a quarterly meeting in the 'Boyd Settlement,' *beyond the Mississippi*. "His name is still like 'ointment poured forth' in all the region from the St. Lawrence to the settlements beyond the last mentioned river. And his piety lives in the persons of his descendants, who have been the faithful adherents of the Wesleyan cause through every vicissi-

tude. Thus it is that 'he being dead, yet speaks' for that Master whose truth he so zealously proclaimed while living."[16]

Let good "Father Keeler" "live forever," then, in the veneration of Canadian Methodists, though his record in the history of the Church must be so brief. To him belongs, so far as I can ascertain, the enviable distinction of having been the first native Methodist itinerant of the province, and he gave his whole ministerial life to its people.

Woolsey and Keeler labored successfully on their hard circuit this year, though the former was still a sufferer from severe disease. He had to go over it on foot, being unable to get his horse across the bays and rivers. He traveled many miles a day, preaching sometimes twice, and seldom sitting down from morning till night. "My knees and ankles," he says, "pained me very much; and when I was preaching I used to stand sometimes on one foot, and then on the other, to get rest. But rest was not easily obtained, even in bed, my knees and ankles were so swelled and full of pain. My soul, however, was happy in the Lord, and my spirit rejoiced in God my Saviour."

On his return to the next Conference, his brethren withdrew him from the inclement climate of the province and sent him to Connecticut. His Canadian campaigning was thus ended, but his services in helping to lay the foundations of the Church in that distant country are gratefully appreciated by its people. He continued to travel in the states down to the year 1838, when he was recorded among the "superannuates." He went into a quiet and beautiful retreat at Rye, on Long Island Sound, where he spent his remaining years,

[16] Carroll's "Past and Present," p. 178.

venerated and beloved among his neighbors, a dear and happy old man—a St. John among the Churches, laboring occasionally, as his strength would admit, writing the unpretentious but most entertaining notes of his early evangelical adventures, and dying at last in great peace and comfort, in 1850—"a holy man," say his brethren, in their Conference Minutes, "a good preacher, and he shall be held in universal remembrance."[17] He ranks as one of the founders of the denomination in New England as well as in Canada.

In 1796 Dunham and Coleman returned to the province, accompanied by two new laborers, men of note, Samuel Coate and Hezekiah C. Wooster.

Coate had been received into the New York Conference of 1794, and had traveled Flanders Circuit, N. J., and Albany Circuit, New York. He went to the province, therefore, a deacon. He was a unique character, and has left many an agreeable and some sad reminiscences in the Canadian Church. He would have passed for an exquisite, had it not been for the evident piety and laborious zeal of his early ministry. He was a wonder among the simple people of the wilderness, but they admired more than they revered him. He had a fascinating eloquence, and "excelled," it is said, "all who went before him," and, some judges think, "all who have come after him."[18] He was fastidious about his dress; most of the itinerants of that day had the neatness and mien of gentlemen, but Coate ranked above most of them in this respect. He was among the last who retained the clerical gown introduced at the organization of the denomination in 1784. His long hair received special attention, and it flowed down upon his shoulders in graceful curls. "Every night, with his

[17] Minutes, 1850. [18] Playter, p. 55.

garters, would he tie up his beautiful locks, and every morning would he comb them out, allowing them to repose on his shoulders and back. Indeed, he was the Absalom of the people, attracting the eyes and winning the admiration of all. His wife, too, was like Abigail, 'of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance.' When the husband and wife were together, they were called the handsomest pair in Canada." Another authority says, "He was evidently a very extraordinary person for such a day and country. He swept like a meteor over the land, and spellbound the astonished gaze of the wondering new settlers. Nor was it astonishment alone he excited. He was the heaven-anointed and successful instrument of the conversion of hundreds. His success, in the early part of his career, was like that of Whitefield." [19]

His manners were in the highest degree courteous and affable. He had, however, some eccentricities, but they were of a favorable kind. "His manner of entering the houses of his people was singular and very striking. On coming to the home of a friend in Adolphustown, he reined up his horse without the gate, alighted, took off his saddle-bags, and came to the door. The door was opened for him, and he came in. But instead of speaking to the family and shaking hands, he knelt down by a chair, and, after praying a short time, he arose and then very affectionately greeted every member of the family. Although no preacher probably follows such a practice of *secret* prayer, yet no one can condemn, but rather admire, this fruit of inward recollectedness and godly simplicity. Samuel Coate's wife was not a hinderance but a helpmate to her husband. Having no family, she used to

[19] Carroll.

hold meetings in her house with females, and would often mount a horse and accompany her husband to his appointments."

He labored about fourteen years in Canada, from the Bay of Quinte to Montreal; six years he was presiding elder, and few Methodist preachers swayed a larger influence or had better prospects, when, borne away by his popularity, as is supposed, he entered upon a devious course which terminated apparently in his ruin. In 1810 he was located by the New York Conference. He had erected a costly church and parsonage for the Methodists in Montreal, and traveled largely in the states and in England to collect funds for its debt, studying meanwhile the French language that he might preach to the Canadian French. But on his return he accepted an offer of ordination in the English Church. He was settled over a congregation, but soon retired. He then became a merchant in Montreal, was unsuccessful, and lost all his property. Being an unrivaled penman, he attempted to support his family by that accomplishment. He could write the Lord's prayer with microscopic fineness on an English sixpence, or on the nail of his thumb. He achieved a masterpiece of penmanship, took it to England, had it engraved at an expense of £1,600, traveled all over England selling it, at £2 a copy, obtained access, by his ingratiating manners, to all kinds of society, and at last fell into habits of vice. His excellent wife and daughter, whom he had left in Canada, never saw him again. "He never," says the local historian, "returned to the land in which he had spent useful and happy years, nor to the people who loved and admired him, and who, notwithstanding his fall, would have received him again, even as the Saviour received repenting Peter." But "the old Meth-

odists" of the province clung, it is said, to the hope that he died penitent, for he had sent a letter home deeply mourning over his downfall.

Wooster was a very different character. He left, at his death, on a fragment of paper, the following dates of his history: "Born, May 20, 1771; convinced of sin, October 9, 1791; born again, December 1, 1791; sanctified, February 6, 1792." Religion with him "was in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." No vagueness attended the facts of his Christian experience, nor the presentation of experimental truth in his ministrations. He might pre-eminently be called "a flaming herald" of the word, for it was "in his heart as a burning fire." He commenced his ministry in 1793, on the Granville Circuit, in Massachusetts. As this circuit was within the limits of the Albany District, then superintended by the devoted Thomas Ware, I suppose he joined the Albany Conference of that year. The two following years he spent in arduous labors on circuits in New Jersey and New York. In 1796, ready to suffer the loss of all things for Christ, he volunteered, with Samuel Coate, to join the pioneers beyond the Canadian line. His history, during that expedition, would form a romantic and almost incredible narrative. Three weeks were spent on their route, during which they lodged every night under the trees of the forest. He traveled about three years in Canada, preaching almost daily, and with a power seldom equaled in the history of the Christian ministry. There was, indeed, in his word, an energy quite irresistible. The dwellers in the wilderness, long destitute of the means of religion, heard with amazement his overwhelming eloquence, and often fell before him, in their forest congregations, like dead men. One of his successors there

says: "Such was the holy fervor of his soul, his deep devotion to God, his burning love for the souls of his fellow-men, that he was the happy instrument of kindling up such a fire in the hearts of the people, wherever he went, particularly in Upper Canada, that all the waters of strife and opposition have not been able to quench it. . . . The grace of God wrought mightily in him. O what awful sensations ran through the assemblies while Calvin Wooster, and others of like spirit, were denouncing the just judgments of God against impenitent sinners, in such pointed language as made the 'ear to tingle,' and the heart to palpitate!"[21]

He was a man of Abrahamic faith, and his prayers seemed directly to enter heaven, and prevail with God. He carried with him an unceasing spirit of prayer. Often at midnight would he rise and call upon his God, while the inmates of the house where he made his temporary abode were awed by the solemn voice of his supplications ascending amid the silence.

Such was the unction of his spirit, and the bold power of his appeals to the wicked, that few of them could stand before him; they would either rush out of the house, or fall to the floor under his word. An anecdote is related in illustration of the power of his faith. A revival occurred under his labors, which was attended with overpowering effects among the people. His presiding elder, Dunham, entering the assembly at a time when the people were falling to the earth under the power of the truth, condemned the excitement, and knelt down to pray that God would allay it. Wooster knelt by his side, and in a whispering tone prayed, "Lord, bless Brother Dunham! Lord, bless Brother Dunham!" He had not prayed thus for many minutes,

[21] Bangs, anno 1799.

before the presiding elder was smitten down upon the floor; his complaints were turned into grateful praise, and he went forth spreading the divine flame through the length and breadth of his district, "to the joy and salvation of hundreds of immortal souls."[22]

The rigors of the climate, and the excess of his labors, injured his health, and in 1798 he was seized with pulmonary consumption. Yet he did not immediately give up his ministrations, and his marvelous power over his hearers continued even when he could no longer speak loud enough to be heard except by those who stood immediately around him. It is authentically recorded, that when so far reduced as to be unable to speak above a whisper, his broken utterance, conveyed by another to the assembly, would thrill them like a trumpet, and fall with such power on the attention of the hearers that stout-hearted men were smitten down to the floor; and his very aspect is said to have so shone with "the divine glory that it struck conviction into the hearts of many who beheld it."

At last, hopeless of any further health, he returned to his parental home, to die amid his kindred. I have discovered a single glimpse of him, on his route homeward, in the journal of the quaint but earnest-minded Lorenzo Dow. That eccentric man had been laboring sturdily on extensive circuits in New England. Through all his wandering course, he carried with him a profound religious solicitude, not unmixed, perhaps, with the infirmities of partial insanity; and amid apparent ebullitions of humor, his spirit hungered and thirsted after God. He writes, in his own unpolished but explicit style and with deep suggestiveness, that when

[22] Memorials of Methodism, etc., p. 213.

he was on the Orange Circuit he "felt something within that wanted to be done away. I spoke to one and another concerning the pain which I felt in my happiest moments, but no guilt. Some said one thing and some another; yet none spoke to my case, but seemed to be like physicians that did not understand the nature of my disorder. Thus the burden continued, and sometimes seemed greater than the burden of guilt for justification, until I fell in with Thomas Dewey, on Cambridge Circuit. He told me about Calvin Wooster, in Upper Canada—that he enjoyed the blessing of sanctification. I felt a great desire arise in my heart to see the man, if it might be consistent with the divine will; and not long after, I heard he was passing through the circuit, and going home to die. I immediately rode five miles to the house, but found he was gone another five miles further. I went into the room where he was asleep; he appeared to me more like one from the eternal world than like one of my fellow-mortals. I told him, when he awoke, who I was, and what I had come for. Said he, God has convicted you for the blessing of sanctification, and the blessing is to be obtained by the simple act of faith, the same as the blessing of justification. I persuaded him to tarry in the neighborhood a few days; and a couple of evenings after the above, when I had done preaching, he spoke, or rather whispered out an exhortation, as his voice was so broken, in consequence of praying, in the stir in Upper Canada, where from twenty to thirty were frequently blessed at a meeting. He told me that if he could get sinners under conviction, crying for mercy, they would kneel down, a dozen of them, and not rise till they found peace; for, said he, we did believe God would bless them, and it was according to our faith.

At this time he was in a consumption, and, a few weeks after, expired. While whispering out the above exhortation, the power which attended the same reached the hearts of the people, and some who were standing and sitting fell like men shot in the field of battle; and I felt it like a tremor run through my soul and every vein, so that it took away my limb power, and I fell to the floor, and by faith saw a greater blessing than I had hitherto experienced, or, in other words, felt a conviction of the need of a deeper work of grace in my soul—feeling some of the remains of the evil nature, the effect of Adam's fall, still remaining, and it my privilege to have it eradicated or done away. My soul was in an agony—I could but groan out my desires to God. He came to me, and said, Believe the blessing is now. No sooner had the words dropped from his lips than I strove to believe the blessing mine now, with all the powers of my soul; then the burden dropped or fell from my breast, and a solid joy and a gentle running peace filled my soul. From that time to this I have not had the ecstasy of joy or a downcast spirit as formerly; but more of an inward, simple, sweet running peace, from day to day, so that prosperity or adversity doth not produce the ups and downs as formerly; but my soul is more like the ocean, while its surface is uneven by reason of the boisterous wind, the bottom is still calm; so that a man may be in the midst of outward difficulties, and yet the center of the soul may be calmly stayed on God." I make no apology for this citation. It is a gem from a rude casket, but worthy to be strung among the many unpolished yet precious jewels which glitter on the thread of our history.

Such was the influence of Wooster on this wayward but energetic man—such was the power of his elo-

quence, whispered from lips blanched with mortal disease, on the rude congregations of the Northwest.

He passed on to his home and lay down to die; but before his spirit left the body, it seemed already in heaven. He was asked, when his power of speech was almost gone, if his confidence in God was still strong. "Strong! strong!" was his whispered but exulting reply. When he was fast sinking, and death was almost in view, he exclaimed that "the nearer he drew to eternity, the brighter heaven shined upon him." On the 6th of November, 1798, he passed into the heavens.

With such men, of course, the whole region of their travels was soon astir. Bangs says that a great revival ensued, which extended far into the states. Hundreds were awakened and converted, and no little opposition followed. Bangs records examples reported to him on the spot. "A stout opposer of the Methodists," he says, "hearing that his wife was in a prayer meeting, rushed violently into the room, seized his wife, and dragged her to the door, when, attempting to open it, he was himself seized with trembling, his knees failed him, he fell helpless upon the floor, and was fain to beg an interest in the prayers of the very people whom he had so much despised and persecuted. He rose not till the Lord released him from his sins and made him a partaker of his pardoning mercy. This very man afterward became an itinerant minister, with whom I was personally acquainted, and had the relation of these facts from his own lips. All, however, were not so fortunate. Coleman, calling to visit a woman under conviction for sin, while talking with her, was assailed by her husband, who struck him on the forehead so violently that he carried the mark for a considerable time."

Opposition, however, could not stand long before

Wooster. His strange power was a terror to evil doers. The Church antiquarian[23] to whom we are indebted for so many interesting facts of our early Canadian history says: "He was a rare example of the holiness he preached. Of his piety and devotion the old people were never weary of speaking in terms of the most glowing admiration. His very breath was prayer. An old lady who entertained him, informed me that on his arrival he would ask the privilege of going up to the loft of their one-storied log building, which was the only place of retirement they had, and to which he had to mount up by means of a ladder. There he would remain in prayer till the settlers assembled for preaching, when he would descend like Moses from the mount with a face radiant with holy comfort. And truly his preaching was 'with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.' It was not boisterous, but solemn, spiritual, powerful. He was the instrument of a revival characterized by depth and comprehensiveness, a revival of the work of sanctification. Under his word the people fell like men slain in battle. This was even the case when he became so exhausted that he could preach no longer, or his voice was drowned in the cries of the people. He would stand with angelic countenance and upturned eye, bringing his hands together, and saying in a loud whisper, 'Smite them, my Lord! my Lord, smite them!' And 'smite them' He did; for 'the slain of the Lord were many.'"

The societies were now rapidly multiplied, the circuits extended in every direction, and at the next Conference nearly eight hundred (795) members were reported—a gain of 321 for the year, averaging more than eighty for the labors of each preacher.

[23] Carroll.

Methodism was thus spreading effectively through all these middle and northern sections of its vast field. It already arrayed within them an army of more than a hundred and twenty-four thousand (124,029) members. Its ministry had become a mighty force, in numbers and character. Humble edifices were rising rapidly, temporary sanctuaries, destined to give way in our day to commodious and beautiful temples. Its people were generally poor and illiterate, but there were not a few families of wealth and high social position interspersed among them. That its foundations now laid were substantial and broad, its subsequent history has attested.

CHAPTER VII.

METHODISM IN THE EASTERN STATES—1792–1796.

Lee at Boston — His Itinerant Excursions — Asbury re-enters New England — The Lynn Conference — Benjamin Bemis — Pickering's Homestead — Conference at Tolland — Enoch Mudge, first Native Methodist Preacher of New England—His Early Labors and Character — Aaron Hunt — Joshua Taylor — Daniel Ostrander — Zadock Priest, first Itinerant who died in New England — His Affecting Death — His Grave — Joshua Hall — Lee itinerating in Maine — First Circuit formed — Persecutions — Thomas Ware — Hope Hull — His Eloquence — Rev. Mr. Williams and Rev. Dr. Huntington attack the Methodists — Methodism in Tolland — Asbury Returns — Methodism in Boston — Results of the Year.

I HAVE recorded the progress of Methodism in the Eastern States from its origin in 1789 down to the first New England Conference in 1792. Lee went from this session to the General Conference at Baltimore, and afterward to his paternal home in Virginia, where he spent about five months preaching continually, and making excursions, to counteract the schism of O'Kelly. On the 20th of February, 1793, he re-entered Boston with horse and saddle-bags, in the fashion of the primitive Methodist itinerancy. He arrived after dark, much fatigued, "and with wet feet," from the wintry slush of the roads. His recollections of Boston could not be the most cheering, but he now found there a warm welcome, and "was comforted," he says, "with the Boston class, which met soon after I got at Mr. Burrill's." The next day he hastened with a glad heart to his "old friends" at Lynn, feeling "thankful to God for bringing him back again," and still more thankful

to find "that religion had revived among the people" in his absence.

On the next Sabbath (24th) he preached to them in their yet unfinished house from 2 Sam. xx, 9: "Art thou in health, my brother?" "It was a good time," he says "to the people, and profitable to myself. We then administered the sacrament, and three grown persons were baptized, and several added to the Church."

He continued about three weeks in Lynn and its vicinity, but as it was supplied by the services of Rainor, he departed on the 18th of March on another excursion. He says: "I set off on my tour to Rhode Island and Connecticut. I rode to Boston, and at night preached on Gal. iii, 11. I found satisfaction in preaching, and the people were quite attentive. Then Brother Ezekiel Cooper exhorted, and his words seemed to have much weight with the hearers."

During this tour he visited Easton, Pawtuxet, Warwick, Greenwich, Weckford, Charlestown, New London; thence he journeyed to General Lippett's, in Cranston, to Providence, Needham, and on to Boston; after which he returned to Lynn. He continued to travel and preach almost daily until the Conference of the first of August ensuing, confining himself, however, (if indeed it can be called confinement,) mostly to Boston, Lynn, Marblehead, and Salem. Lynn was his favorite resort, "being," says his biographer, "more attached to it than to any other place within the bounds of his district."

On the 21st of July Asbury again entered New England on his way to the second Lynn Conference. He was weary, and had been sick nearly four months, but pressed onward, attending to his responsible business, and traveling during these four months of illness about

three thousand miles. On "Monday 28,' he says, "we rode upward of thirty miles, through great heat, to Lynn. On our way we fed our horses, and bought a cake and some cheese for ourselves; surely we are a spectacle to men and angels. The last nine days we have rode upward of two hundred miles, and, all things taken together, I think it worse than the wilderness. The country abounds with rocks, hills, and stones, and the heat is intense, such as is seldom known in these parts."

Though wearied and feeble, he thought not of repose. The next day he ascended the pulpit and proclaimed, "Hear ye me Asa, and all Judah, and Benjamin; the Lord is with you, while ye be with him, and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him he will forsake you." 2 Chron. xv, 2.

On the first day of August, 1793, the Conference convened at Lynn. The preachers of the circuits in Western New England were not present, as a separate session had been appointed for their convenience at Tolland, Conn., to be held in about a week after the one at Lynn. We have but little information respecting the Lynn session. Eight preachers were in attendance. Asbury remarks, "We have only about three hundred members in the district; yet we have a call for seven or eight preachers: although our members are few, our hearers are many." The business of the session closed on Saturday. The next day four sermons were delivered in the new chapel, beginning at six o'clock in the morning. The little band of itinerants partook of the Lord's Supper with the disciples at Lynn, and on Monday morning dispersed to their various fields to suffer, labor, and triumph another year. They had refreshed themselves by the hospitality of the young and prosper-

ous Church by the interchange of their ministerial sympathies, and by united invocations of the blessing of God on their common work; but a cloud had hung over their small assembly, and their hearts had been touched, though not unprofitably, by deep sorrow. The news of the O'Kelly schism in the South reached them. Nearly twenty-five preachers, in various parts of the connection, had ceased to travel; four of them had withdrawn, and among these was their own "Boanerges." John Allen had laid down his Sinai trumpet to take it up no more. He was esteemed one of the most powerful preachers in the connection, but was infected with O'Kelly's errors. Lee attributed his alienation to this fact.[1] He became a Congregationalist, then a Universalist, and at last retired to Maine as a physician. Other causes of grief added to the bitterness of these, and the sick and wayworn Asbury resumed his travels, remarking, that "circumstances had occurred which made this Conference more painful than any one Conference besides."

But "no man having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God;" these men so believed, and they believed also that "there remaineth a rest for the people of God." They addressed themselves therefore with renewed zeal to their toils and sufferings, and none more so than Asbury, who now mounted his horse, and set his face toward the West. He passed a short time at Waltham, in the homestead of Benjamin Bemis, who was one of the first Methodists in that town, and whose mansion, sequestered among hills, and surrounded with fragrant orchards, became not only a sanctuary for the worship of his rustic neighbors, but the favorite home of the

[1] Lee's History, p. 196.

itinerants of Methodism. He was a man of wealth, and his hospitalities seemed only to enhance his prosperity. Nearly all the great men of the early Church were entertained beneath his roof, and proclaimed the "glorious Gospel" in the shade of his trees to the assembled yeomanry of the town. The conversion of many souls has consecrated the spot, and its old historical reminiscences still endear it to the Methodists of the Eastern States. Its devoted proprietor lived to enjoy a happy and sanctified old age, and died in full hope of meeting his itinerant brethren in heaven. It became the family residence of Pickering, who married the daughter of Bemis, and passed to heaven amid its venerable associations.[2] Here Asbury now preached to a large assembly, and was cheered to find a deep interest among the people. "Several souls," he writes, "are under awakenings, and there is hope the Lord will work. The harvest is great; the living faithful laborers are few."

His physical sufferings increased, but he pressed forward. On Monday, 11, the Conference met in Tolland, Conn.[3] This town was about the center of the region included in what was then the Tolland Circuit.[4] It was previously connected with the Hartford Circuit, and the great reformation, which had extended like fire in stubble through the latter, under the labors of Hope Hull, George Roberts, Lemuel Smith, and their col-

[2] The first Methodist Church of Waltham (now the Weston Society) was formed in the house of Bemis, and his own name was first on its class paper. The first class consisted of eight members, six of whom bore the name of Bemis. One of them was Mary Bemis, who joined the society in her seventeenth year, and married Pickering two years afterward.

[3] Asbury's Journals. The Minutes say the twelfth, but the time was often anticipated or delayed in these early days.

[4] Letter of Joseph Howard, of Tolland, to the writer.

leagues, the preceding two years, had left distinct traces in Tolland. A small society had been formed, and a chapel erected on the estate of an excellent townsman, Mr. Howard, who befriended the infant Church, and most of whose family were made partakers of the grace of life through its instrumentality.[1] It was in this chapel, then but partially finished, that the Conference assembled. Most of the preachers, ten or twelve in number, were entertained at Howard's hospitable house, where, as with Bemis, Lippett, Barratt, Bassett, Gough, Rembert, and Russell, the itinerants of these early times found sumptuous fare among the few "noble" who believed. Asbury addressed them from 2 Tim. ii, 24–26: "The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth," etc. "Lame as I was," he writes, "I went through the business; I was tired out with labor, heat, pain, and company." Yet he departed the same day. "Being unable to ride on horseback, I drove on in a carriage through the rain, over the rocks, in the dark, and came to Dr. Steel's, at Ellington. I am now not able to move from my horse to a house." Unable to ride his horse, he still journeyed onward. "I came in Brother S.'s carriage to Hartford. From what we can gather, we are encouraged to hope that upward of three hundred souls have been awakened, and more than two hundred

[1] My correspondent, last cited, was one of his sons; two other sons had to endure rather severely the force of the "principles" of those times for their attachment to Methodism. They were carried, together with Abel Bliss, Esq., of Wilbraham, to Northampton jail for resisting oppressive taxations for the support of the Congregational Church.

converted to God the last year. If this work goes on, Satan will be laboring by all means, and by every instrument."

From Middletown he passed to New Haven, thence to Derby, "with a return of inflammation in the throat," thence to West Haven, "very unwell," thence he "had heavy work to get to Redding, being lame in both feet." On his way to the latter place he was compelled to "lay down on the roadside." "I felt," he says, "like Jonah or Elijah. I took to my bed at Redding." The bed, however, was no place for such a man. On the eighteenth we find him riding "ten miles on horseback, and thirteen in a carriage," to Bedford, where he "rested a day at dear Widow Banks's, and was at home," exclaiming, "O how sweet is one day's rest!" On the twentieth he left New England, "riding thirty-three miles" on horseback. "On the route my horse started," he says, "and threw me into a mill-race, knee deep in water, my hands and side in the dirt; my shoulder was hurt by the fall. I stopped at a house, shifted my clothes, and prayed with the people. If any of these people are awakened by my stopping there, all will be well." Such was Asbury, and such his early toils and sufferings in New England. He belongs to her history as well as to that of every other portion of the Church, and the personal incidents of his official visitations to the East, however scanty, are no insignificant illustrations of the times and the man.

The Lynn and Tolland Conferences formed the following plans of labor for the ensuing year:

Ezekiel Cooper, Elder; Boston, Amos G. Thompson; Needham, John Hill; Lynn, Jordan Rexford; Greenwich, David Kendall, Enoch Mudge; Warren, Philip Wager; Province of Maine and Lynn, Jesse Lee.

George Roberts, Elder; Hartford, George Pickering, Joshua Hall; New London, G. Roberts, R. Swain, F. Aldridge; Middletown, Joshua Taylor, Benjamin Fidler; Litchfield, Lemuel Smith, Daniel Ostrander; Tolland, Joseph Lovell. Besides these, there were three New England Circuits within the Albany District, under the Presiding Eldership of Thomas Ware. namely, Granville, Hezekiah Wooster and Jason Perkins; Pittsfield, James Covel and Zadok Priest; and Fairfield, Aaron Hunt and James Coleman. The itinerant field in New England comprehended, then, two districts, and part of a third, fourteen circuits and stations, and twenty-five laborers.

This bare catalogue of names is strikingly suggestive. We find in it itinerants whom we have already met in other and remote fields; the records of no other body of men, except perhaps in military history, can show such movement and energy. We have sketched elsewhere several of these militant evangelists: Cooper, Pickering, Roberts, Wooster, Ware, Coleman, but some of the remainder equally merit our attention.

Enoch Mudge bore the distinguished honor of being the first native Methodist preacher of New England. He was born in Lynn, Mass, on the 21st of June, 1776. "O what a mercy," he exclaims in a manuscript record before me, "that I was born of parents that feared the Lord, and consecrated me early to him! If they did not fully know the way of the Lord when I was born, their hearts were imbued with his fear. I distinctly recollect that among my first impressions were those made by their pious efforts to give me just views of the goodness of my heavenly Father, and the great benevolence of my kind and gracious Redeemer. While truth and grace were thus struggling for an early existence,

all that is natural to an unrenewed heart was working in their usual courses, checked indeed, but not subdued. When, in my fifteenth year, Jesse Lee came to Lynn, my parents were among the first to hear and welcome the joyful tidings of a Gospel which they never before had known in such richness. They were both brought into the liberty of the truth. The fruits of piety in them were clearly discerned by me. Lee's preaching was affecting, searching, humbling, soothing, and instructing. I longed to have him talk with me, but dared not put myself in his way. I resolved and re-resolved to open my mind to him; but when the time came my heart failed. About four months passed away in this manner. I heard preaching, went to class-meeting, and sought the company of serious persons. When fear, gloom, and despair began to hover over me, at a class-meeting, John Lee, who was truly a son of consolation, seeing my case, was enabled to pour in the balm of divine truth, and lead my thirsty soul to the fountain of grace, opened in the atonement for poor, weary, and heavy-laden sinners. I left the meeting with a ray of hope, retired, and poured out my soul before God. Access was granted, and encouragement dawned amid the darkness. I feared to go to sleep lest I should lose the tender and encouraging views and feelings I had. I had little sleep, arose early, and went forth for prayer. My mind became calm, tranquil, and joyful. I was insensibly led forth in praise and gratitude to God. I drew a book from my pocket and opened on the hymn that commences with

'O joyful sound of Gospel grace!
Christ shall in me appear;
I, even I, shall see his face;
I shall be holy here.'

"The whole hymn seemed more like an inspiration from heaven than anything of which I had a conception, except the word of God. I could only read a verse at a time, and then give vent to the gushing forth of joy and grateful praise. In this way I went through it. But I said to myself, What is this? Is it pardon? Is it acceptance with God? I cannot tell; but I am unspeakably happy. I dared not to say this is conversion. It is what I have sought and longed for; but O that I could always be thus grateful to God, and have my heart flow forth in such a tide of love to my Saviour. During the day, which was the 16th of September, 1791, I often sought to be alone to give vent to my feelings. At evening I sought to unbosom myself to a young man with whom I was familiar, on these subjects. As soon as I had told him he burst into tears, and said, 'O, Enoch, God has blessed your soul! do pray for me, that I may partake of the love and joy God has given you.' And now, for the first time, my voice was heard in praying with another. My faith became confirmed, and I went on with increasing consolation and strength. In this state of mind I could not be content to enjoy such a heavenly feast alone. I took opportunity to speak to my young friends; a goodly number embraced the Saviour, and devoted their lives to his service. I heard Lee preach from this text: 2 Tim. ii, 19, 'Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity.' I felt the privilege and obligation of having been consecrated to God by parents, and of making a surrender of myself to him. It was with fear and trembling I went forward to the holy communion; but the Lord blessed his word and ordinance to me, and I found wisdom's ways pleasant, and all her paths peace. I felt the need of mental and moral cultivation, and applied

my mind to it; but have reason to lament the want of a judicious instructor."

The economy of Methodism is peculiarly adapted to call out talent and direct it to its appropriate sphere. Its numerous minute services, in which every member is expected to share as he is able, render manifest generally the whole ability of its people. From praying in the prayer-meeting, they rise to be class-leaders, exhorters, and, if God grants them gifts, and the call of his Spirit, local, and, finally, traveling preachers. Enoch Mudge passed through these gradations. Marblehead, Malden, Boston, and other places, were often visited by him at the request of Lee. He began by "exhorting" at their social meetings, and, in time, expounded the Scriptures in their pulpits, applying himself meanwhile to appropriate studies.

At the New England Conference held in Lynn, August 1, 1793, he was received on trial, and appointed to Greenwich Circuit, R. I. Warren and Greenwich Circuits were united, and included all the State of Rhode Island, and all the towns in Massachusetts as far east as Bridgewater, Middleborough, etc. "This," he writes, "was a most important crisis in my life. I was a youth in my eighteenth year, leaving my father's house, from which I had not been absent a week at a time in the course of my life. The Methodists were a denomination little known, generally opposed and disputed in every place they approached. Never had a preacher of this order been raised in New England before. All eyes were opened for good or for evil. Hopes, fears, and reproaches were alive on the subject. My friends felt and prayed much for me; but my own mind was keenly sensible of the importance of the undertaking. Anxiety and incessant application to duty brought on a

distressing pain in my head, and finally threw me into a fever within two weeks after leaving home. The Lord was gracious, and kept my mind in a state of resignation and peace. I felt that it was a chastening for reluctance to duty, and strove to be more entirely devoted to the work. I was very sick for a short time, but got out as soon as possible. It had been reported that I was dead, and one man, who felt an interest in my case, came to the house to make arrangements for my funeral. When I set out on my circuit again I was hardly able to sit on my horse, and suffered much through weakness and distress occasioned by riding. I met with much better acceptance than I feared. With feelings of unutterable gratitude, I returned at the close of the year to my father's house in peace, health, and gladness of heart, to see my friends and attend Conference. Never did my parents appear so dear. Never did the quiet and retired scenes of home appear so precious. But I had no home now. I felt I was but a visitor. It would be as useless as impossible to try to describe my emotions. With a heart ready to burst with yearning for home, and the early attachments of my first Christian friendship, I left for my new appointment on New London Circuit, which required about three hundred miles travel to compass it. I attended Conference at Wilbraham, September 8, 1794, and went thence, in company with Jesse Lee, to New London, and commenced my labors. Here was a very laborious field for three preachers. The senior preacher, Wilson Lee, was taken sick, and called off from his labors." We have seen his mission thence to Southold, L. I. "I had," continues Mudge, "daily renewed cause of gratitude for the abundant goodness of God to such a feeble, utterly unworthy instrument as he graciously

deigned to use for the good of precious souls. Riding, visiting, preaching, class and prayer-meetings, took up the time every day in the week. After the second quarter was past, which I felt was profitable to me, and I hope to many others, I went to supply the place of a preacher who had left Litchfield Circuit, Mass., and after going once around, I passed to Granville, Conn. This was an extensive field, and required much labor. Here I had the happiness of having Joshua Taylor as a fellow-laborer. I derived instruction and profit by a brotherly intercourse with him. On this circuit, also, I first became acquainted with Timothy Merritt, before he was a preacher. His piety and devotedness to God and the cause of religion gave an earnest of his future usefulness. He began to preach the next year. Our next Conference was held at New London. Here I received deacon's orders, and was appointed to Readfield Circuit, in the then Province of Maine. Long rides and bad roads, crossing rivers without ferry-boats, buffeting storms, breaking paths, sleeping in open cabins and log huts, coarse and scanty fare, all served to call out the energies of the mind and body. I assure you this was a pleasant task, and a soul-satifying scene of labor, because the people were hungry for the word. O my blessed Master, may I hope to meet many in thy kingdom who then first heard and embraced the word of truth! Preaching places multiplied, our borders were enlarged, the Church increased, God prospered his cause.

"Readfield was the first place in the State of Maine where a Methodist meeting-house was erected. A glorious work was commenced, that has, in its advancement, filled the land. It was on this circuit I formed an acquaintance with young Joshua Soule, now Bishop

Soule. I had received his wife into society on my first circuit, when she was only about twelve years old, and he was but about sixteen. He had a precocious mind, a strong memory, a manly and dignified turn, although his appearance was exceedingly rustic. In mentioning Mrs. Soule, I am reminded of several pious young women who embraced religion on my first circuit, and who afterward became the wives of several distinguished preachers. Among these were Mrs. Kent, Mrs. Soule, Mrs. Hill, Mrs. Ostrander, and Mrs. S. Hull. It is cheering to look over the scene and recognize the children and children's children of those who then were brought into the Church in its infancy.

"In 1796 our Conference was held at Thompson, in the State of Connecticut. Here I received elder's orders, although but just entering my twentieth year. I was stationed at Bath, in Maine. Jesse Lee, our presiding elder, went to the South, and was absent six months. I attended the quarterly meetings, and went around the circuits to administer the ordinances. This was a year of incessant labor, great exposure, and toil, so that toward its close my health failed. Although stationed at Bath, I preached there but one or two Sabbaths. The work in Maine being under my charge, in the absence of Lee, I went to Penobscot, whither the appointed preacher declined going. He supplied Bath for me, and I went on to Penobscot, picked up some scattered appointments, and opened others; organized Churches, sent for help, enlarged the field of labor, and had a prosperous year there."[6]

Such was the beginning of the long ministerial career

[6] I have sketched this interesting character, as also most of the early New England itinerants, more fully in the "Memorials of Methodism in the Eastern States." 2 vols. 1848 and 1852.

of Enoch Mudge, one of the chief and most admirable characters of New England Methodist history. In stature he was below the ordinary height, stoutly framed, with a full round face healthfully colored, and expressive of the perfect benignity and amiability of his spirit. In advanced life his undiminished but silvered hair crowned him with a highly venerable aspect. In manners, he would have been a befitting companion for St. John. The spirit of Christian charity imbued him; hopefulness, cheerfulness, entire reliance on God, confidence in his friends, extreme care to give no offence, and a felicitous relish of the reliefs and comforts of green old age, were among his marked characteristics. He was distinguished by excellent pulpit qualifications, fertility of thought, warmth of feeling without extravagance, peculiar richness of illustration, and a manner always self-possessed and marked by the constitutional amenity of his temper. None were ever wearied under his discourses. He published a volume of excellent sermons for mariners, and many poetical pieces of more than ordinary merit. We shall meet him again in the course of our narrative.

Aaron Hunt survived to the present generation, one of the most venerated men of the denomination. He was born in East Chester, Westchester County, New York, March 28, 1768. When near seventeen years of age, he went to New York city, and was employed as clerk in a store by a distant relative. "There I prided myself," he says, "in just dealing and good morals, and generally attended divine worship in the Protestant Episcopal Church, where the doctrine taught confirmed me in the belief that all religion consisted in *morals* and *ordinances*."[7] When about nineteen years of age, he

[7] Letter to the author.

attended a meeting in the old John-street Church, and heard, for the first time, a Methodist preacher. "He so explained and enforced the word of God," he says, "as to convince me that I had no religion." He sought it earnestly, and when about twenty-one years old, he "found redemption in the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins." He now felt an ardent desire for the salvation of others, and began to speak and pray in social meetings. He rode thirty miles to hear Benjamin Abbott, and while the old man sung the hymn, "Refining fire go through my soul," etc., "an awful trembling," says Hunt, "came upon me and all in the house; my bodily strength failed, and I felt agony for a clean heart."[8] He afterward attained this blessing. In the winter of 1790–1, "encouraged by that dear old man, Jacob Brush, presiding elder of the New York District," he went to Long Island Circuit, with William Phœbus. In May, 1791, he was admitted on trial in the New York Conference, and appointed to Fairfield Circuit, Connecticut, in company with Mills, "a man small in stature, intelligent, sound, an able preacher, and rather inclined to dejection." Fairfield Circuit included the whole of the county of that name, and some places in its vicinity. In 1792, he was appointed to Middletown Circuit. It included Middlesex and a great part of New Haven Counties. This year his presiding elder directed him to cross the Connecticut River, to "break up new ground." From East Hartford he passed to Enfield, Springfield, Wilbraham, etc., and thence into Windham County, preaching in Pomfret, Mansfield, and several of the adjacent towns, "generally," he remarks, "to good congregations; though at one appointment, whither I had been directed by Jesse Lee, I had

[8] MS. autobiography.

no congregation, nor would the gentleman on whom I called suffer me to stay in his house. I had to ride several miles in the darkness of the night to a public house. A kind Providence witnessed my prayers and tears, and overruled this for good. The innkeeper invited me to stay and preach in his ball-room the next day. I did so; the congregation was so large that we adjourned to the meeting house, where I preached with great liberty. In this tour I labored in many places not before visited by any Methodist. We did not wait to be invited, in those days, but sowed the seed of the kingdom wherever we could. As by our excellent economy my brethren soon succeeded me, good societies were formed in many places." At the Tolland Conference, Aug. 12, 1793, Bishop Asbury gave him deacon's orders, and appointed him again to Fairfield Circuit. There he found several of his spiritual children, and met with a cordial reception. At the Conference of 1794 he located on account of his prostrate health. On the 18th of January, 1800, he resumed the duties of an itinerant preacher. In June following, he received elder's orders, at the Conference in New York, and was appointed to Litchfield Circuit, then about two hundred miles in circumference. About this period he located his family on a small farm in Redding, Connecticut, and gave himself fully to the work of the ministry, though with great sacrifice of domestic comfort. At the Conference of 1801, he received a dispensation from regular work, for domestic considerations; hence, his name was retained on the Minutes without an appointment; still he labored extensively in different places during that year. In 1802 he was appointed to New London Circuit, which then extended from the Thames to the Connecticut River. "Here we had," he says,

"some excellent, though small societies, especially in New London and Norwich, with whom and my highly esteemed colleague, Michael Coate, I enjoyed great satisfaction and many happy seasons." The next two years he labored on New Rochelle Circuit, New York, and during the following two in New York city. A remarkable revival of religion, such as had never been known before in that community, prevailed through these two years. In 1807 he returned to New England, and traveled Litchfield Circuit. He continued to itinerate some fifteen years longer, much of the time in New England, when he was returned as supernumerary, but still moved to and fro, preaching as he was able.

A singularly faultless character made his quiet old age a living ministry in the Church. When tottering with years he wrote, "I am approximating the completion of my fourscore years, and my interest in the prosperity of our Zion is not abated, nor do I regret the toils and privations of those early days. I only grieve that I have not done more and better for the interests of Christ's kingdom. The great atonement made for sin, and the consequent sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, are my only hope of future and eternal rest."[9]

At last, aged more than ninety years, the veteran lay down to die. "During his sickness," say the Minutes, "he frequently quoted the hymn, 'Jesus, lover of my soul,' and was often favored with seasons of great tenderness and rapture. He sweetly fell asleep in Jesus, April 25, 1858," in Sharon, Connecticut.

Joshua Taylor, who lingered, in Maine, till our own day, was born in Princeton, New Jersey, Feb. 5, 1768. A strictly moral education in his childhood, especially

[9] Letter to the author.

the example and instructions of a devoted mother, imparted to his mind an early bias toward religion. "I sometimes wished," he writes, "that my conscience would let me alone until I became older, and then I would turn and do better; at other times I feared I should go one step too far in the ways of sin, and lose my soul for ever, the thought of which was terrible. When I was between twenty and twenty-one years of age it pleased God to take from me my mother by death. The death of my father, which took place about three years before this, made no lasting impression on my mind; but now I wept and mourned, but so ignorant was I of the nature of religion, that, at first, I had no thought that any thing more was necessary than to reform my outward life—and accordingly I renounced whatever I thought to be sinful, and paid strict attention to religious meetings, reading the sacred Scriptures, and also attempted to pray in secret. In so doing I was brought, after a few weeks, to feel the need of an inward, as well as an outward, renovation. Now trouble and distress rolled in upon me. I strove to pray for mercy, and at times hoped that I should obtain it, but at other times was almost in despair. In this situation I continued about four months, during which time the devil took every advantage of me, and poured in his fiery darts like a flood; he assailed me with strong temptations to atheism, deism, and fatalism, and with these ideas almost overpowered me. These agitations were of frequent and long continuance. But still my heart remained hard; it seemed as if my convictions were all leaving me, and I should be left to my own destruction. I mourned because I could not mourn aright, and nothing afforded me any encouragement.[10]

[10] Letter to the author.

In February, 1789, on a Saturday evening, he attended a Methodist prayer-meeting at a private house. "I felt," he says, "that I only grew worse, and must perish in my present condition. The meeting closed, and my heart remained hard. Part of the people withdrew; but a few remained, and I with them. Before leaving the house, some one proposed to have prayer again, and while the company were singing, light broke into my mind. I had such a discovery of the beauty and excellence of the Saviour's character, that I felt to admire and adore, and, glory be to his name, I felt that he did have mercy upon me. All his attributes appeared lovely to my soul, and I sunk down into calmness and resignation to his will, so that I went home rejoicing and praising God, and in this sweet frame closed my eyes for sleep. I loved my Saviour, I loved his children, and rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Some months later he was induced to exhort in public, and soon the way was opened before him for more important labors. He joined the itinerant ranks in 1791. The next year he entered New England, and labored on Fairfield Circuit. "I recollect," he writes, "that some of our rides were long and tedious in the winter. But we found kind friends, and in the course of the year had a blessed revival of religion; many were awakened, and a goodly number were converted to the Lord. One instance, which I recorded in my memorandum, I will here state. A Mr. S., living in Stepney, was friendly to the Methodists until his wife joined our society, but after that he became so enraged that he took an oath he would disown her if she ever went into a class-meeting again. When I came round again, they were both at meeting. After preaching, I re-

quested the class to stop, as usual; she stopped, but when he perceived it he came into the room, and taking hold of her arm, pulled her out. This act excited much feeling among us; they were not forgotten in our prayers; and as they were going home, the Lord smote him with such keen conviction that he groaned with anguish. The next time when I came round I preached at his house, and found him under deep conviction, but strongly tempted to put his horrid oath into execution; and yet he seemed sensible that it would terminate in the ruin of his soul. I reasoned a long time with him, and left him in the hands of the Lord. When I came round again he professed to have found peace with God, and, after making a very humble confession for what he had said against his wife and us, he joined our society himself. A blessed time of rejoicing was experienced both in his family and in the little Church."

During the following four years he traveled successively Middletown, Conn., Granville, Mass., Trenton, N. J., and (the second time) Middletown Circuits. In 1797, when the appointments in Maine, which had increased to six circuits, were organized into a district, he was appointed presiding elder over them, and will ever hold a prominent place in the annals of the Church in that state as the first officer of the kind who exclusively pertained to it. He continued sole presiding elder in Maine, during four years, with such men as Timothy Merritt, Nicholas Snethen, Enoch Mudge, Peter Jane, Joshua Soule, John Broadhead, Daniel Webb, and Epaphras Kibby, under him. Though that was "the day of small things," it was one of great men, in Maine, as we shall hereafter see. From Maine he passed to Boston District, where he continued two years; here again he commanded a corps of the "giants of those

days;" among them were Joshua Wells, Joshua Soule, George Pickering, Dr. Thomas F. Sargent, Dr. Thomas Lyell, etc. In 1803 he was reappointed to the Maine District, then comprehending eleven circuits—the whole extent of Methodism in the state. The following two years he was stationed at Portland, and in 1806, after fifteen years of indefatigable travels and toils, located—following the almost universal example, perhaps we may say necessity, of married preachers in those days of "much work and little pay." He will reappear in our pages at future dates. An old fellow-laborer wrote of him: "He was small in stature, and of a clear, methodical, and orderly mind. His labors were extensive and useful. He filled many important appointments in towns, circuits, and districts. He faithfully propagated, and carefully guarded, primitive Methodism through evil and good report. He might have had his choice of many places to settle in, could he have been prevailed upon to take charge of a parish. He was a most delightful companion. The man that did not grow better by the company of Joshua Taylor, must have neglected a rare privilege. I never knew malice to touch his character. I dare not indulge my feelings or expressions—he is yet alive. In the closet, in the grove, by the roadside, and in public, I have witnessed his devotions."[11]

Another well-known name occurs in this list of veterans, that of Daniel Ostrander. His prominence, for many years, in the New York Conference—where he continued until our day, a representative of the earlier times—has identified him in the public mind with that body, and but few of the present generation of Eastern Methodists know anything of his intimate

[11] Letter from Rev. E. Mudge to the author in 1846.

connection with their early history. Daniel Ostrander was, nevertheless, one of the founders of Methodism in New England. He commenced his ministry within its limits, and spent the first thirteen years of it (save one) in sharing the trials and struggles of Lee, Roberts, Pickering, Mudge, Taylor, and their associates; laboring mightily in western Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and as far east as Boston. He was born, August 9, 1772, at Plattekill, Ulster County, N. Y. His ancestors were Hollanders, and his whole career was an exemplification of the old Teutonic vigor. Upon no other class of population did Methodism exert a more profound effect, and from none did it produce more indomitable laborers.

Daniel Ostrander was converted in his sixteenth year, and from that date devoted his life wholly to God. He entered upon his ministerial travels in 1793, as colleague of Lemuel Smith, on Litchfield Circuit. In 1794 he traveled, with Menzies Rainor, the Middletown Circuit. The three following years he was successively on Pomfret, Conn., Warren, R. I., and Boston and Needham Circuits. In 1798 he returned to Pomfret, as colleague of Asa Heath. The three succeeding years his appointments were Tolland, Pomfret, and New York city. He next took charge, for two years, of the New London District, which comprehended during a part of that time the entire field of Methodism in Connecticut, (except one circuit,) most of Rhode Island, and a portion of Massachusetts. On retiring from this district he entered Duchess Circuit, N. Y., where he continued two years.

From 1808 to 1827 he labored in Brooklyn; Albany city, two years; on Hudson River District, four years; New Rochelle; Ashgrove District, and Hudson River

District, four years each. In 1827 he re-entered New England, and superintended the New Haven District. The next year he presided over the New York District, which extended into the southwestern section of Connecticut. He continued in this responsible charge four years, at the expiration of which time he was appointed to New York city, where he labored two years. The following two years he was at New Rochelle, and in 1836 became, for four years more, presiding elder of the New York District. In 1840 he took charge of the Newburgh District, where he continued till 1843, when he retired into the ranks of the superannuated, which then included, in the New York Conference, a goodly company of veterans, his companions in the early struggles of Methodism in the east—Hibbard, Woolsey, Crawford, Pease, Hunt, Eben Smith, Washburn, and others.

"From the year 1793 to the year 1843," say his brethren of the New York Conference, "a full term of fifty years, so remarkably did the Lord preserve him, that only three Sabbaths in all that time was he disabled from pulpit service by sickness. Where, in the history of ministers, shall we find a parallel to this? For fourteen years he was on circuits, eight years in stations, (New York, Brooklyn, and Albany,) and twenty-eight years in the weighty and responsible office of presiding elder. The districts of New London, New Haven, Saratoga, Hudson River, New York, and Newburgh, remember him with affection. His high standing in the esteem of his brethren in Conference appears from the fact, that since the establishment of the delegated General Conference in 1808, they always elected him a member of that highest judicatory in our Church, down to the year 1840, inclusive; and never has his seat in

an Annual Conference been vacant, during the forty eight years that the writer of this article has known him, till called to his reward. The same is thought to have been the case from the time of his admission as a member of this body. His firm integrity, sound judgment, and solid piety won the confidence of his brethren. He identified himself with all the interests of the Church, as a faithful and wise steward. Always at his post, and prompt to serve, whether on a circuit, in a station, in quarterly meetings, in annual or General Conferences, and on all suitable occasions, his clear voice, his manly eloquence, his decision of mind, his sound arguments and manly zeal, all showed that he preferred Jerusalem above his chief joy; yet it was in the pulpit that his pre-eminence shone the brightest—so warm in delivery, sound in doctrine, clear in preaching, pungent in warning, heavenly in comforting, and gracious in encouraging, that hard must have been the heart in his audience that could sit unmoved, or go away unprofited; for a divine unction gave power to the word. Yes, we have heard him preach, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, till the shouts of saints and the cries of penitents mingled, completely drowned the highest strains of his stentorian voice. Such was Daniel Ostrander. Firmly, faithfully, and wisely did he hold on to the plow, nor look back till he was called to his heavenly rest. He was well schooled at an early day; for the first nine years of his itinerant life were spent, principally, among the sharp-eyed opponents of Methodism in New England, where the battles of controversy called into action all the heavenly armor so essentially necessary as a panoply of a Methodist preacher. There, in all his conflicts, he proved himself a workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word

of truth. It was there, too, that He, who gave Adam his Eve, gave our dear brother his excellent Mary Bowen, who had, in 1793, in the bloom of her youth, believed in Jesus and embraced Methodism perseveringly, in defiance of all the persecution which her choice of this people involved her in, till shielded by the protection of so worthy a husband of such an excellent wife. Daniel and Mary Ostrander were lovely in their lives, and in their death (almost) not divided; for, in January, 1844, five weeks from the death of her husband, she triumphantly left the world and joined him in glory."

In the New York Conference of 1843 he appeared for the last time among his ministerial brethren. His fifty years' effective work was done. He preached, occasionally, on Sabbaths, until his final sickness; and on the 29th of August, 1843, at a camp-meeting near Newburgh, delivered his last sermon, from Psalm cxlvi, 8: 'The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind,' etc. It is said to have been an able discourse, and one of his happiest efforts.

Through the whole of the summer he seemed to be ripening for heaven, and soon after this last message his health failed. When asked if Christ was still precious, with his last and utmost effort he cried, 'Yes!' and peacefully fell asleep in Jesus. So lived, so labored, and so died Daniel Ostrander, literally worn out in the best cause—his life, from sixteen years of age to seventy-two, a living sacrifice to God. Thousands will rise up in the last day and call him blessed.

Zadok Priest was a youthful martyr to the extreme labors of these times of struggle and victory. A few still linger about the regions of the old circuits of New London and Warren, in whose hearts the preciousness

of his memory remains unabated by the changes of the more than half century which has passed over his grave. He was a native of Connecticut, and commenced his ministry in the year 1793 on the Pittsfield Circuit. The next year he traveled the New London Circuit with Wilson Lee, David Abbott, and Enoch Mudge. In 1795 he labored on Warren Circuit, where he was attacked with hemorrhage of the lungs, which terminated in consumption. He retired from his work to die. There resided at that time, and for many subsequent years, at Norton, Massachusets, a venerable Methodist, known as "Father Newcomb," whose house was ever open as an asylum for the itinerants. Thither Zadok Priest went—"to die with them," as he said when the door was opened to receive him. He was confined there three weeks, and then passed down into the valley and shadow of death, expressing "a strong confidence in the favor of God, and no doubt of his salvation."[12] He died on the 22d of June, 1796, in the twenty-seventh year of his age, and was buried on the estate of Mr. Newcomb. He was generally beloved, and a Christian brother now rests by his side, who esteemed him so highly in life as to request that he might sleep with him in death.

One of our best authorities in Methodist history says, after a pilgrimage to his grave, that the Warren Circuit, which had been recently formed, was a six weeks' one, and then included all the state of Rhode Island east of Narraganset and the Blackstone, and all the county of Bristol, in Massachusetts, south of Taunton River, and even extended as far east as Bridgewater, in Plymouth County, embracing what is now the greater part of the Providence District, and a portion of the Sand

[12] Minutes, i, p. 196.

wich District, and containing about twenty appointments. The church in Warren, which had been built the previous year, and was the first in the state of Rhode Island, was the only one on this great circuit. During this year, probably through the severe labors and exposure then usually connected with the itinerant life, Priest contracted the disease under which he went home to die. But his father, who was opposed to him as a Methodist preacher, in a spirit which was somewhat characteristic of the times, refused him the shelter of his roof in his last extremity. With a sad heart the weary and dying itinerant turned away from the home and friends of his childhood, and returned to his flock on the Warren Circuit. "On one of the first days of June, 1796, just after the surrounding forests had put forth their leaves of green, the youthful preacher, in the very last stage of his fatal disorder, bent his weary and faltering steps to the house of 'Father Newcomb,' the hospitable doors of which were opened wide to receive the homeless stranger, as the representative of a Master who once 'had not where to lay his head.' There, in the midst of the quietude and kind attention of this rural Christian home, after lingering but three weeks, he died in holy triumph, but twenty-six years of age—the first Methodist preacher who ascended from New England. The rustic Christian neighbors, whose hearts had been stirred by his eloquence, with tears and affectionate sympathies, bore him to his last resting-place on Father Newcomb's farm. The event occasioned a great sensation among his fellow-laborers and the infant societies in New England. His obituary may be seen in the Minutes for 1796; and Lee, who was his presiding elder at this time, also handsomely notices him in his History of Method-

ism. But after the decease of Father Newcomb, which occurred in 1829, and the removal of preaching from his house, and the departure of nearly all the men of his time, Zadok Priest has been mostly forgotten." [13]

The visitor found the house of Newcomb "in one of the most retired neighborhoods of New England," a large two story dwelling, "which had been a first-class rural mansion of the Revolutionary period, but is now nearly in ruins. Its spacious old kitchen, which before Father Newcomb's conversion, after the custom of the times, was used as a dancing-hall, but afterward was made to resound with the voices of Lee, Pickering, Ostrander, and the mighty men of the times, is now reduced to half its former dimensions, and looks desolate indeed. The room from which Priest took his flight to his mansion of eternal rest is on the lower floor, and opens from the kitchen on the right, and looks out upon the south and west, from which it catches the lingering rays of the setting sun." He found the grave, "a little north of the house on another road, bearing a humble inscription recording the itinerant's death, and testifying that 'he being dead, yet speaketh.'" His hospitable friends sleep around him. "United in life, they are not separated in death." It was the pious intention of "Father Newcomb" that a church should be built on the lot on which Zadok Priest is buried, and between whose grave and the road space was left for that purpose.

Joshua Hall's labors as a Methodist preacher were extensive and exceedingly varied. His itinerant ministry was limited to about ten years, but during that time he preached in most of the New England States, and formed some of the most important societies. He was born in Lewistown, Sussex County, Del., October

[13] Rev. Dr. Coggeshall.

22, 1768, and "experienced religion in Kent County, near Milford, in February, 1787."[14] In November, 1791, he was sent by Asbury to the North, and passed to Elizabethtown Circuit, N. J., where he traveled the remainder of the year. In 1792 he was admitted on probation by the Conference at New York, and appointed to Croton Circuit, N. Y.[15] The next year he entered New England and became the colleague of Pickering, on Hartford Circuit. "Here," he says, "we labored part of the year and formed New London Circuit." In 1794 he was appointed to "Vermont," but did not travel there. "Jesse Lee," he writes, "had made a tour through Fitchburgh, Ashburnham, Rindge, Selby, Marlborough, Parkersfield, Dublin, Chesterfield, Orange, Hardwick, and Athol, and I had to go and supply a long series of appointments, to which he pledged that a preacher should be sent after the conference. George Cannon, who was expected, did not come, and I felt it my duty to remain till the next conference, which sat at New London."

In 1795, by a long transition, he passed to Penobscot Circuit, Me., which had recently been surveyed by Lee. He was the third Methodist preacher sent to that state, and the first who traveled after Lee on the Penobscot. "I met with much opposition there," he says, but a gracious reformation cheered him in this distant and difficult field. He formed the first societies which were organized along that river. "God," he remarks, "wonderfully blessed my feeble labors, and when I left I had occasion to exclaim, What hath He wrought!" Before the next Conference he labored about three months at Readfield, visited Portland, and preached there a

[14] Letter from him to the writer.

[15] Ibid. His appointment this year is not mentioned in the Minutes

short time, in company with Stephen Hull, and thence passed on to the Conference at Thompson, Conn. Several years had now elapsed since he had visited his home, and he longed to return to its affections and more genial climate. But those were times for great sacrifices as well as great labors; Asbury pointed him to the field white unto the harvest, and reminded him of the fewness of the laborers. Hall decided to tarry. "I have never," he wrote, some years before his death, "seen one of my relations since 1792, and never shall till I meet them in the eternal world; for I am now in my seventy-ninth year, my energies are paralyzed; all my faculties, especially my memory, fail fast. I have, you perceive, a trembling hand; it is difficult for me to write." Instead of returning South he was appointed, with his former colleague, Pickering, to Boston and Needham. Thence he went to Sandwich, on Cape Cod; there his labors were attended with great success; an extensive reformation took place, and seventy persons were gathered in the society. "Blessed be the Lord, O my soul!" exclaims the veteran on recalling those times, "this was the Lord's work, and the beginning of Methodism in that place." In 1797 he was appointed to Martha's Vineyard, and was instrumental in planting the Church on that island. The next year Asbury requested him to throw himself into the city of Providence, provide as he could for his support, and, "by the blessing of God, raise up a society." He went thither, opened a school for his subsistence, preached and labored among the people, and formed a class, the beginning of Methodism in that city.

In 1799 he was appointed to Warren and Greenwich Circuit, as colleague with Ezekiel Canfield and Truman Bishop. In 1800 his appointment was "Rhode

Island." He visited Newport, "preached four times by daylight, and had a meeting again in the evening. "This," he says, "was the hardest day's work I ever performed, but it was delightful." He had the honor of forming the first Methodist Society of Newport. Moving to and fro with the usual rapidity of the itinerants of that day, he soon reached New Bedford and introduced Methodism there. "John Gibson," he writes, "came to help me while we raised and unfurled the evangelical standard; though smitten down for a time it still waves there, bless the name of the Lord! May it always wave there till time shall be no more!"

In the Minutes of the next year he is returned on the located list. He visited Maine, however, and labored with Joseph Baker at Camden one year, during which he preached also at Thomaston, Union, Lincoln, Hope, and Northport. "We had," he writes, "Daniel Rickow to assist us, and a good revival of religion spread throughout the circuit." In 1802 he returned to Penobscot River and chose a resting-place at Frankfort Mills, the home of his old age. During his itinerant life he did good battle for the faith; he commenced many important societies from the Penobscot to Long Island Sound. After his location he continued to labor as his health would admit, and sustained public responsibilities in the State. In 1830 he was placed on the supernumerary list of the Maine Conference, and afterward transferred to the list of the superannuated. He concludes a brief narrative of his life with the joyful exclamation, "I have almost finished my journey, and heaven is my future home. Glory be to God, my Saviour, for ever and ever, Amen!"

He lived to see his Church prosperous and prevalent throughout Maine and throughout the nation, and

died, sending a message to his Conference, "Tell the brethren I go in holy triumph. There is no darkness on the path." They commemorate him in their Minutes: "Joshua Hall," they say, "after walking with God seventy-seven years and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom seventy-five, died in holy triumph, at Frankfort, Me., December 25, 1862, in the ninety-fifth year of his age. He possessed much native shrewdness, quick perception, and a remarkable command of language. He acquired in early life a fair English education, as a preacher was always interesting, retaining his mental vigor wonderfully almost to the end of his protracted life, and was a genial, cheerful, loving Christian gentleman, whom everybody loved."

In some of the foregoing personal sketches I have, necessarily, had to anticipate events of much later date, especially in respect to Maine. Methodism had not yet reached that province. It was assigned as an appointment to Lee himself in the year 1793. It then, and for more than a quarter of a century afterward, pertained to Massachusetts, and its settlements were sparse, and mostly on the seaboard or principal rivers. Most of the interior regions were but occasionally favored with ordinances of religion. Lee himself refers to it as "an unimproved country," and speaks of the "thinly settled" places, "where the people could seldom hear a sermon of any kind." "At that time," he adds, "there were very few settled ministers in the province, except in the old parts near the sea-shore." Such was precisely the field for a man of his spirit. He longed to sound the trump of the gospel through the primeval forests and along the great rivers of that now noble state; and though he knew no one there to welcome him on his arrival, nor any one elsewhere to

give him "a particular account of the place and people." yet, as "it was commonly understood that they were in want of preaching," he took his horse and saddle-bags, and directed his course toward it, not knowing what should befall him.

He left Lynn on Thursday, September 5, and on Saturday was at Portsmouth. His former visits had procured him some steadfast friends, who greeted his return; they endeavored to obtain the Court-house for him to preach in, but it was refused. The next day (Sabbath) he walked to it, with a few friends, but the authorities still denied him the privilege of using it. They knew not the spirit of the man, however, and only secured him a better hearing by their discourtesy. He coolly ascended to the "step of the door of the Court-house and began." When he commenced he had but about twelve hearers, but they soon began to flock together, and swelled to some hundreds before he concluded. They crowded into several adjacent streets, and listened with solemnity and manifest emotion, while he declared to them, with "much freedom," the acceptable year of the Lord.

The next day he was "off early," crossed the river, and entered the "Province." His biographer has preserved but brief notices of this first excursion to Maine: it was, however, but a visit of observation; his subsequent labors in that new region are more fully detailed, and will afford us some interest in their due place. "He continued," says his Memoir, "in these settlements, traveling to and fro and preaching, with good hopes that his labor would be blessed of the Lord, until the latter part of October, at which time he returned to Lynn. In January, 1794, he repeated his visit to the settlements on the Kennebec and Penobscot Rivers, and

enlarged his borders by preaching in many new places. His difficulties were many, but God gave him strength to bear all with becoming patience and resolution. He succeeded in forming a Circuit in the Province which, by the way, is all that can be said of it, for we are not assured that there was a single society of Methodists within its whole bounds."

There was, in fact, no society formed within its limits, or within the entire province, until after the ensuing Conference. The first class in Maine was organized at Monmouth about the first of November, 1794. Lee has given us, in his History of the Methodists, a brief sketch of this second tour. "I traveled," he says, "through a greater part of that country from September to the end of the year. I went as far as Castine, at the mouth of the Penobscot River; up the river to the upper settlements, which were then just below the Indian settlement called Old Town; thence I returned by the way of the Twenty-five mile Pond to Kennebec River; thence up the Sandy River, and back to Hallowell, and thence through to Portland."

By tracing his route on the map it will be perceived that he surveyed quite thoroughly most of what was then the occupied portion of the province, namely, the region of the coast from Portsmouth to Castine, and the interior, between the Kennebec and Penobscot, as far up, and even farther, than what has since become the site of Bangor on the latter, and Waterville on the former. "Although," he continues, "I was a perfect stranger to the people, and had to make my own appointments, I preached almost every day, and to crowded assemblies. After viewing the country, I thought the most proper place to form a circuit was on the Kennebec River. It was accordingly formed,

and called Readfield. This was the name of the first circuit formed by the Methodists in that part of the country. It was about two hundred miles from any other which we had in New England. It extended from Hallowell to Sandy River." "It will, no doubt," he adds, "afford some satisfaction to the people to know the exact time when the Methodists first preached among them on that circuit, and in the neighboring towns. On the 13th of October, 1793, the first Methodist sermon was preached in Hallowell; on the 15th, in Farmington; on the 17th, in New Sharon; on the 18th, in Mount Vernon; the 19th, Readfield; the 21st, Winthrop; the 22d, Monmouth."

These were all the towns comprised in the Readfield Circuit in 1793. Others were added, however, in the beginning of 1794.

While Lee was thus preparing the way in the wilderness, his colleagues, in other parts of New England, were assiduously cultivating and extending their respective fields of labor. Their success had already begun to appear ominous to the settled clergy of the time. Hitherto they had been considered either fanatical intruders, whose ardor would soon abate, or "a set of broken merchants," who had come up from the South, and, being poor, and too indolent to work, had betaken themselves to preaching, as the best mode of spunging from the devout people of New England the means of subsistence, but who would soon find it convenient to go elsewhere.[16] It was now becoming quite manifest, however, that they were in earnest, and were intrenching themselves in all the land. Demonstrations of hostility were therefore made in many directions. The pulpits denounced them as "wolves in sheep's clothing,"

[16] Bangs's History, vol. i, book iii, chap. ii.

the "false prophets who should come in the latter day," or "itinerant peddlers of false doctrine." Though formally authorized and ordained by a Church which had spread through most of the states, they were not recognized by the magistrates of New England, especially in Connecticut, as regular clergymen, and Roberts was prosecuted and fined for consecrating the marriage of a couple of his people. Several laymen, whose consciences were too scrupulous or obstinate for the laws which required them to support what they deemed a dead and heretical ministry, were thrust into prison, or despoiled of their property. Popular violence sometimes disturbed their solemn assemblies.

The people of New England were then, even more than at present, addicted to speculative disputation on theological subjects. The doctrines of the new sect were thoroughly canvassed, and as thoroughly caricatured in the pulpit, in the vestry, at the village inn, and at the fireside. Both its preachers and its people were incessantly harassed with assaults about "principles." The former had to contend with additional vexations respecting their "education," and "notes" in the pulpit. Their unquestionable and effective eloquence was a sufficient vindication of them in the latter respect, their tact, and sometimes their wit, in the former. The preacher, deacon, and lawyer generally formed, in those days, a trio of leadership in the village society of New England. The former usually assailed the new comers with distant dignity from the pulpit, the deacon pursued them with rigorous questions of orthodoxy to their meetings and social circles, and the lawyer, strictly conforming then, as now, to the strongest local influence, followed, to ply with his logic, the deacon's metaphysics. The former two Lee generally rebutted by

apt quotations of the Scriptures; with the latter he felt himself at liberty, from the impression he had of their less commendable motives, to use the weapon of his native and cutting satire. Oftentimes did he turn upon them the ridicule of large companies of bystanders, and compel them to shrink back abashed at the unexpected reaction of their own impertinence.

Thomas Ware, a man whose memory is revered by all who knew him, was this year, as we have seen, on a district which comprehended several New England appointments. He refers to the species of trials I have described as frequent in the Eastern States at that time. "It was common," he remarks, "for the Methodist preachers, when they preached in new places, and often in their regular appointments, to be attacked by some disputant on the subject of doctrines, sometimes by ministers, but more frequently by students in divinity or loquacious and controversial laymen. And so far as my experience on this district extended, I discovered much rancor and bitterness mingled with these disputes. I am obliged to say that, during the three years of my labors in this section, I found not so much as one friendly clergyman. There may have been such; but all with whom I conversed, or whose sentiments I knew, were violent in their opposition to us; and the rough manner in which I was usually treated by them, rendered me unwilling to come in contact with them. But when it so happened that we must try our strength, I found no difficulty in defending the cause I had espoused, for a foe despised has a great advantage. And when a man has a system which is clearly scriptural, he needs only a little plain common sense and self possession to maintain his ground, though a host of learned theologians should unite against him. In Granville and Pittsfield

the current of opposition was very strong against us." Hope Hull had labored in this region under Ware, and evidently understood the best way of managing these troubles. Ware says, "I knew and almost envied him his talents. I thought, indeed, if I possessed his qualifications I could be instrumental in saving thousands where, with my own, I could gain one." This extraordinary young man drew multitudes after him, who, disarmed of their prejudices, were, under the influence of his discourses, like clay in the hand of the potter. It seemed that he could do with them just as he pleased. And yet, in the midst of this astonishing influence and career of usefulness, he sighed for a southern clime, and at his own request he was permitted to retire to another portion of the field. Perhaps it was best, lest, if he had remained, he might have been idolized by the devoted people among whom he labored, to his own injury and theirs. A man of some distinction represented him as a skillful musician, who could excite any passion he pleased. "In our parts," said he, "Arminians were deemed guilty of abominable heresy, and our minister had often denounced them and consigned them to certain perdition; but Hull came to a neighboring town, an influential individual invited him to ours, and informed our minister that, if he refused him the meeting-house, he should preach in his own house. The meeting-house was opened, and it was crowded to overflowing. Our minister was present, and was the first who began to weep. My eyes were alternately on the minister in the pulpit and the one in the pew, and I was surprised to see how soon and how completely the latter was unmanned. Hull, it is true, soon left us; but by his unequaled power to move the feelings of the people, he so far secured their attention as to commend

to their understanding and hearts the Gospel he preached, and Arminians have since been permitted to live among us. From that time to the day of his death our minister was never heard to say a word against them."

It was in the period under review that the Rev. Mr. Williams, of Tolland, who had become alarmed at the rapid spread of the Methodists around him, published a sermon against them, fully exemplifying the hostile spirit with which they were then treated. It was the first attack made upon them from the press, and was considered by the infant Church a serious event in their yet uncertain history. To us it is interesting, at least as an indication of the times, and the first in a series of assaults from pamphleteers, which have been most useful provocatives of success. It was delivered to his people with a degree of emphasis quite unusual in his preaching, and produced a profound sensation among them.[17] The discourse was accompanied in print by a letter from Dr. Huntington, of Coventry; both documents were most unscrupulous in their charges, and uncharitable in their spirit. The laborious zeal and self-sacrificing devotion of the new preachers were construed into hypocrisy. "There may be little sincerity," said Williams, "where there is a great share of zeal. When a new sect has arisen in the Christian Church, the leaders, especially, have made high pretensions to eminent piety and love for precious souls. The Christians in the Church of Corinth and Achaia were practiced upon by the same sort of teachers. St. Paul says they are false apostles, deceitful, worthless, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel,

[17] Letter to the author from Joseph Howard, of Tolland, who was present at the time.

for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers, also, be transformed into the ministers of righteousness, corrupt teachers, beguiling unstable souls, creeping into houses, and leading captive silly women, laden with sins, and led away with divers lusts," etc.[18]

Such are some of the ungenerous allusions of Williams to the disinterested men of the first New England Methodist ministry. He stoutly denounces the pretension of a divine call to the ministry, considers it a "tempting of heaven to give" the pretender "up to delusion," and further remarks, "These are no new things; multitudes have come forth as preachers on this ground, within a number of years past, in these New England Churches, whom you believe were deceived themselves, or aimed to deceive others."

Dr. Huntington's appended letter is equally severe. "The modern Methodist teachers," he asserts, "are men of Machiavellian principles, and do, without any scruples, make use of truth and deceit promiscuously, as they judge will most promote the interest of their party." He speaks of their "heretical doctrines," and of Wesley as "a flaming enthusiast," given to "wild singularities," among which he enumerates the "institution of classes and class-meetings."

These are but specimens of the first printed attack on the New England Methodists. It was considered appropriate to the humble and deprecatory devotions of the Fast Day, and was published "with the unanimous approbation of the Association, and at their cordial request."[19]

Some apprehensions spread among the "little flock"

[18] Cited in Dr. Roberts's "Strictures" on the Sermon.
[19] Dr. Huntington's Letter.

at the appearance of this deliberate and formal opposition. They were soon allayed, however. Roberts, presiding elder that year of the district which included Tolland, entered the lists against the two pugnacious divines, with such ability and satirical power, as turned the current of public opinion, to a considerable extent, against them, and effectually disposed them to abandon the controversy.[20] Roberts had an important advantage over the assailants in the tendencies of the popular mind at that time against the compulsory support of the Church by taxation. Being thoroughly republican himself, and a hearty lover of the institutions of his country, he spoke out indignantly on the subject.[21]

I have referred to this polemical rencounter as an illustration of the age. It was unfortunately conducted on both sides. Roberts was scathingly severe in some of his passages. The Congregational combatants, while they could not approach him in satirical force, were even more severe with their stultified abuse. Much must be pardoned to both parties, in consideration of the times. Williams yielded, it may be charitably supposed, to a temporary feeling, not in harmony with his habitual disposition. At their first arrival, the Methodist preachers were hospitably received at his house and admitted to his pulpit. "He received them very cordially, and treated them kindly, until there began to be a reformation, and classes were formed; then an alarm was raised—the preachers were

[20] Dr. Roberts's reply was entitled, "Strictures on a Sermon, delivered by Mr. Nathan Williams, A. M., in Tolland, on the Public Fast, April 17, 1793, with some observations on Dr. Huntington's Letter, annexed to said sermon, in a letter by George Roberts."

[21] A Baptist had actually been lying in the prison at Tolland, about this time, for refusing to pay the "minister's rate" in a Church he could not approve. Roberts availed himself of the fact.

afterward treated by him with indifference and inattention, and finally with such neglect that they ceased to visit him — and then appeared his sermon. He was never known to be so much affected in any discourse he had delivered, or to produce so much apparent feeling among his Church."[22] Time and better information relieved his fears, however, and it is affecting to learn that "before he died he welcomed his Methodist brethren to hold prayer-meetings in his own house." He passed into the grave, grateful for the prayers and Christian regards of those whom he once, honestly, no doubt, opposed as dangerous heretics.

The assailed itinerants had a better and more effectual mode of repelling attacks; their devoted lives and untiring labors for the salvation of the people stopped the mouths and confounded the hostility of their opponents. They moved through all the region of the "Association" which "cordially requested" the publication and aided the circulation of this pamphlet, spreading piety in their course, and raising up in the persons of many who were before considered "reprobates," "living epistles" of their ministry, which were read of all men. "It is very pleasing to me now," says my Methodist authority who lived in Tolland in that day of trial, "to reflect on those times, the beginning of illumination to my darkened mind. I had before that supposed that there was such a thing as religion, and that it was indispensable for the aged and dying, but I had no idea of its real excellence, until I saw it exemplified in the spirit and lives of the Methodist preachers. My father's house was a home for them; there they met and consulted together when they had a day of leisure, while on the circuit, though such a day did not occur more than once

[22] Howard's letter to the writer.

in two weeks, and often not more than once a month. Those were times when they preached, at least, once a day, besides riding many miles. Tolland was about the center of the circuit. The chapel was built on my father's land, perhaps twenty rods from our dwelling. Two of my brothers, a sister, and, I think, my mother all became members of the Church in those troubled days. Among the preachers whom I recollect, were Lee, Rainor, Smith, Roberts, Pickering, Mudge, Hall, Mills, Brush, Hope Hull, Swain, etc. Amid all the opposition Methodism flourished, and for ten years after, with a short interruption, I think, much more than in this day, notwithstanding all later improvements. I like to look back on those times, and I expect to rejoice for ever that it was my lot to become acquainted with Methodism in early life. I consider it the chief instrument in the hands of God of my salvation, and the most happy seasons of my life; and I hope one day to join those who have gone before me in celebrating the praises of my Redeemer forever."[23]

Thus the ecclesiastical year of 1793–94 had nearly passed in labors, trials, and triumphs; meanwhile, as the period for the next Conference approached, the chief apostle of American Methodism, after having traversed the continent, re-entered New England. He was still feeble with disease, and wearied with unremitted labors; but he pressed on as before, journeying and preaching daily.

He passed into Connecticut on Thursday, July 10, 1794. On Saturday the 19th he reached Waltham, where he tarried over the Sabbath, amid warm hearts and hospitable attentions in the mansion of Bemis. On the same day he held a quarterly meeting. "At three

[23] Howard's letter to the author.

o'clock," he writes, "I gave them a discourse on *the little flock*, to comfort the affrighted sheep. Sabbath-day we had love-feast at eight o'clock, sermon at half past ten, and again in the afternoon: there was some life in the love-feast, and sacrament also."

On Monday he entered Boston, "unwell in body, and with a heavy heart." The times had changed somewhat in the city since his previous visit. A home could now be found by the tired evangelist, and the little company of believers had found a place, however humble, for the ark of the Lord. "We have," he writes, "a very agreeable lodging in this town; but have to preach, as did our Lord, in an upper room. We had a prayer-meeting, and the Lord was present to bless us." He tarried in Boston two days. "Tuesday, 22d," he says, "I took up my cross and preached in a large room, which was full enough and warm enough. I stood over the street; the boys and Jack-tars made a noise, but mine was loudest; there was fire in the smoke; some, I think, felt the word, and we shall yet have a work in Boston. My talk was strange and true to some."

This "large room" was a "hired chamber in the house of John Ruddock, opposite Clark's ship-yard, Ship street, a building which, by its situation and tenants, received the name of 'The College.' The Society meetings were frequently surrounded with noises of every kind."[24] On Wednesday the bishop went to Lynn, where he conducted the business of the conference.

The ecclesiastical year closed in the latter part of July. It had been a time of adversity and declension

[24] MS. account of Methodism in Boston by Col. Binney. Col. Binney was an early, wealthy, and liberal member of the Church in Boston, and one of the chief founders of the Wilbraham Academy.

to the general Church; severe trials had also afflicted the small itinerant band in New England. They were hedged in on every side by a decayed Church, whose chief remaining vigor consisted in its pertinacity for its antiquated polemics, and its intolerance toward dissenting sects. They had reached, too, a degree of advancement where, more than at any earlier period of their history, the sectarian jealousy of the established Churches became excited and alarmed; but they surmounted all impediments and made good progress. The circuits were extended on all sides; eighteen were reported at the next Conference, a gain of more than one fourth on the number of the preceding year. Lee had surveyed extensively the wilderness of Maine, and was now on his way to the Conference to solicit a laborer for that vast field, carrying with him a schedule of appointments, which, after personal inspection, he had definitively arranged into a circuit that extended along the Kennebec, quite into the interior of the province. New Hampshire and Vermont were also "stretching out their hands," and the itinerant corps resolved to extend its lines into those remoter regions at the approaching Conference. Thus the three remaining sections of New England were about to be permanently occupied by them.

While the aggregate membership of the Church had decreased during the year more than 2,000, chiefly by the O'Kelly schism, the local membership of New England had advanced from 1,739 to 2,039, a small addition when compared with the progress of later years, but large for those days of trial and struggle.

CHAPTER VIII.

METHODISM IN THE EASTERN STATES, CONTINUED. 1792–1796.

Another Conference at Lynn — Asbury Itinerating — The Wilbraham Conference — Interesting Scenes there — New Preachers — Wilson Lee — Scenes in his Ministry — Nicholas Snethen — The Protestant Methodist Controversy — Lee Itinerating — First Preacher Stationed in Maine — Its first Class — First Chapel — First Methodist Administration of the Eucharist — Scenes in Lee's Itinerancy there — Asbury again returns — Results — Conference at New London — Scenes there — Location of Preachers — Lee and Asbury Itinerating — Statistics — Outspread of Methodism — The Thompson Conference — Lorenzo Dow — Results.

The Conference commenced in Lynn, July 25, 1794. Another session had been appointed for the accommodation of the preachers in the western portion of New England, who, therefore, were not present at the one in Lynn. We have scarcely any information respecting the latter. Asbury has recorded but about half a dozen lines concerning it, with no intimation whatever of its business, except that difficulties had arisen which grieved him deeply, and rendered its termination grateful to his wounded feelings. He preached before the Conference and the Society of Lynn twice on the Sabbath, and departed for the Wilbraham session the next morning, passing, with his usual rapidity, a distance of forty miles the same day.

On Tuesday, 29, he rode through Attleborough to Providence. "I had," he says, "no freedom to eat bread or drink water in that place. I found a calm retreat in General Lippett's, where we can rest our-

selves. The Lord is in this family. I am content to stay a day, and give them a sermon." His unfavorable allusion to Providence refers to the conduct of a local preacher from Ireland, who had compromised (as the bishop supposed) his Methodistic principles in an arrangement with some Congregational citizens, by which the few friends of Methodism in the town were absorbed into a new Congregational Society, still known there as the "Beneficent Congregational Church."

On the first of August he left his comfortable retreat at General Lippett's, and, after traveling and preaching daily, reached Tolland, Conn., by the tenth. He was now in the region of the "Association," which had arrayed itself against Methodism, under the leadership of Williams and Huntington. "Ah!" he exclaims, "here are the iron walls of prejudice; but God can break them down. Out of fifteen United States, thirteen are free; but two are fettered with ecclesiastical chains, taxed to support ministers who are chosen by a small committee, and settled for life. My simple prophecy is, that this must come to an end with the present century." He was too sanguine; the ecclesiastical oppressions of Connecticut were not abolished till 1816, and his own sons in the ministry had no unimportant agency in their removal.

By Sunday, 17, he was in Wilbraham, Mass., where he found a Methodist chapel, "forty by thirty-four feet, neatly designed." He was sick and weary throughout this trip, but, being accompanied by Roberts, they were able jointly to hold meetings continually. They made preaching excursions during a fortnight, and on September 2d returned to Wilbraham, lodged with Abel Bliss, a name still familiar to Massachusetts Methodists, and, on Thursday, the 4th, opened the

"Wilbraham Conference." As the itinerants arrived with their horses and saddle-bags, from all directions, dusty and wearied by long journeys, but joyful with cheering reports of success, they were welcomed in the name of the Lord into the new temple, and to hospitable hearths and bountiful tables. The brethren in Wilbraham needed the inspiriting influence of such an assembly. They had struggled for every inch of their progress thus far; they had erected their chapel amid determined hostility, and several of their principal members had been carried away and thrust into prison for refusing to support a creed which their consciences rejected.

The Wilbraham Conference was one of the most interesting in our early history. Great men were there: Asbury, wayworn, but "mighty through God;" Lee, eloquent, tireless, and ambitious, like Coke, for "the wings of an eagle, and the voice of a trumpet, that he might proclaim the Gospel through the East and the West, the North and the South;" Roberts, as robust and noble in spirit as in person; Wilson Lee, "a flame of fire;" Ostrander, firm and unwavering as a pillar of brass; Pickering, clear and pure as a beam of the morning; young Mudge, the beloved firstborn of the New England itinerancy; the two Joshuas of Maine, Taylor and Hall, who, like their ancient namesake, led the triumphs of Israel in the land of the East; and others whose record is on high. The proceedings were what might have been expected from such evangelists: dispatch of business, incessant public devotions, and daily preaching. "Friday, 5," says Asbury, "we had a full house, and hastened through much business." The same day Lee, on his route from the Lynn Conference to New Hampshire, arrived, "sat with them, and

attended preaching at night." Saturday was a great day; Lee, Roberts, and Asbury preached; the three principal men of the occasion. The bishop's discourse was on Mal. iii, 1–4: "Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in; behold he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts," etc. He treated on "the coming and work of John the Baptist; the coming, work, and doctrine of Christ, and his changing the ordinances and priesthood with the ministry and discipline of the Church." It was a sermon for the times. At eleven o'clock Lee ascended the pulpit, and closed the morning session by a powerful discourse, full of encouragement to preachers and people, from 2 Cor. xii, 9: "My grace is sufficient for thee." "The power of the Lord," writes the great evangelist, "was among us." He was profoundly affected himself; few men indeed had better tested the promise by experience. He wept, and the sympathetic emotion spread through the assembly, till there was sobbing and ejaculations in all parts of the house. "I felt," he says, "the grace of God sufficient for me at the time, and I was willing to trust him all the days of my life. O what a precious sense of the love of Jesus my soul enjoyed at that time!" Sunday was a high festival. The services commenced at eight o'clock A. M. The first hour was spent in prevailing prayer, and in singing the rapturous melodies of the poet of Methodism, the doggerels of later days having not yet come into vogue. Asbury then mounted the pulpit, and addressed the throng, appealing to the ministry like a veteran general to his hosts on the eve of battle, calling on them to "put on the whole armor of God," and "endure hard-

ness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ." Conflicts were before them, but their weapons were "mighty through God," and their brethren were moving on to victory through the land. Many might fall, but it would be amid the slain of the Lord, and with the shout of triumph.

After the stirring discourse, he descended to the altar and consecrated four young men to the ministry of the itinerancy, three as elders, one as deacon. Preachers and people then crowded around the altar, and with solemnity and tears partook of the Lord's Supper. Lee's ardent spirit was moved within him, for to him it was a "solemn time," "quickening" and refreshing.

The assembly was dismissed, but the people withdrew only for a few minutes. They again thronged the house, and were addressed in a series of exhortations by Lee, Thompson, and Ketchum. The exhortation of Lee was long spoken of as an example of overwhelming eloquence. "The crowd," says one who heard it,[1] "moved under it like the forest under a tempest." "It was a time of God's power," says Lee. Stout hearts broke under the word, the fountain of tears was opened, and there was weeping in all parts of the house; the emotion at last became insupportable, and the overwhelmed assembly gave vent to their uncontrollable feelings in loud exclamations. The eloquent pioneer addressed all classes, "1, sinners; 2, mourners in Zion; 3, Christians; 4, backsliders; 5, young people; 6, the aged; and lastly, ministers." The services finally closed after continuing seven hours and a half. "It was," exclaims Lee, "a blessed day to my soul."

The Conference was publicly concluded amid this deep interest; the preachers immediately mounted their

[1] Enoch Mudge to the author.

horses, and were away for their new fields, without tarrying for meals. Ten or twelve of them, with Asbury in their midst, passed on rapidly to Enfield. Lee's soul was yet on fire, and though he had taken neither dinner nor tea that day, except a crust of bread which he had begged at a door on the route, and ate on horseback, yet, after "eating a little," he went with Roberts to the meeting-house in Enfield, where the people were waiting, and admonished them to reckon themselves "to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. vi, 11. "It was a profitable time," he says, "to my soul." He "felt the power of the Lord," and had "freedom in preaching." Roberts followed with an exhortation, and thus closed "the last day, that great day of the feast."

Asbury hastened away to attend the New York Conference. At one place on his route calls came to him to send preachers into New Hampshire and Maine, and at another he met Dunham, from Canada, beseeching him to send additional laborers into that opening region. Thus the field was enlarging in all directions, and whitening unto the harvest.

The new ecclesiastical year began with two districts and part of a third, eighteen circuits and stations, and thirty preachers; four circuits and five preachers more than in the preceding year. The names of New Hampshire and Vermont appear, for the first time, in the Minutes.

Of the itinerants who now, for the first time, appear n New England, twelve in number, more than half were recruits from Maryland or Virginia. Among them were conspicuous men, like Christopher Spry, long known in the "Old Baltimore Conference;" George Cannon, who founded Methodism at Provincetown and

Nantucket; John Chalmers, who originated the first Methodist chapel of Rhode Island, (on Warren Circuit,) and fell in his work, as late as 1833, in Maryland, "full of faith and the Holy Ghost," say his brethren; David Abbott, son of the New Jersey "Boanerges," and Wilson Lee.

Wilson Lee we have already repeatedly met in the Middle and Southern states, and west of the Alleghanies. If we remind ourselves of the rapid transitions of the early itinerary, we are hardly surprised to find him again rising up before us in this new and far-off field. He labored briefly, but with great success, in the East. An old Methodist local preacher, of long and honorable service in the New England Church, writes that "the first Methodist I had any knowledge of was Wilson Lee. He preached at Middle Haddam, on the Connecticut. His first prayer was novel in its brevity and fervency, for the people had been habituated to formal prayers of about forty minutes in length. After prayer the preacher took from his pocket a little Bible, read his text, and closed the book. The people saw no note-book, and seeing the preacher fix his eyes on the congregation, instead of a book, their curiosity was raised to the highest pitch. The preaching was with the demonstration of the Spirit, and with power. The people trembled and wept; some fell to the floor and cried aloud for mercy, and some fled from the house and ran home, declaring that the devil was among the people in the stone house. When Wilson Lee saw the effect he stood and cried, 'Glory to God!'" This meeting was the beginning of a profound religious interest in Middle Haddam, in which many souls were converted, under the ministry of Lee, who formed a class, and made it a Sabbath appointment for New London

Circuit. It is now a station, with a convenient chapel. During his labors in Middle Haddam he was sick with fever, which brought him to the gate of death. "It proved a great blessing to the class," continues our authority "by exhibiting his faith on the verge of the grave, and his ardent prayers for his spiritual children. If it should be said that Wilson Lee was not one of the three mighty men, I think none will deny him a place among the thirty, for he was deeply pious, of ardent zeal for his Master, of unwavering faith, which rendered him a successful minister of the gospel, and a useful agent in planting the standard of Methodism in the land of the Puritans. Very few now remain of those who knew him. When I look back to more than half a century, and times and things as they then were, and compare those times with the present, I am constrained to say, 'What hath the Lord wrought?' Then our circuit was more than two hundred miles in circumference, with two preachers, and perhaps one small meeting-house; there are now more than twenty preachers, and as many large and convenient chapels, dedicated to the worship of Almighty God."[2] We have already seen Wilson Lee founding the Church at Southhold, Long Island, on his passage southward from New England, and have traced him through most of his remarkable career.

Nicholas Snethen is a name of considerable note in the history of Methodism. He was born on Long Island, N. Y., 1769. His education was limited to the scanty instruction of the country-school of the day, a considerable portion of his early life being spent on the sea, in charge of his father's vessels, in the flour trade. His subsequent application to books supplied, however,

[2] Letter of Rev. J. Stocking to the writer.

to some extent, the deficiency of his early studies. He acquired a competent knowledge of his own language, and was able to use the Greek and Hebrew in biblical exegesis. He was converted to God in his twentieth year, and preached his first sermon at the age of twenty-one.[3]

He commenced his itinerant labors in New England, in 1794, in the twenty-fifth year of his age. His first appointment was to Fairfield Circuit. In 1795 he labored on Tolland Circuit with Christopher Spry. The year following he traveled the Vershire Circuit, the first projected in the state of Vermont. He has the honor of appearing in the Minutes as the first Methodist preacher formally appointed to that state. In 1797 he was sent to the Portland Circuit, with John Finnegan. The next year we miss him from the Minutes, owing, probably, to his removal southward. In 1799 he was appointed to Charleston, S. C. The following year he was in Baltimore, with Thomas Morrell, George Roberts, Philip Bruce, etc., a band of mighty men. In 1801–2 he traveled at large with Asbury. In 1803 he was again in Baltimore, and the next two years in New York city, with Michael Coate, Samuel Merwin, Ezekiel Cooper, Freeborn Garrettson, and Aaron Hunt. During the three ensuing years he was in the local ranks, but re-entered the itinerancy in 1809, and spent two years in Baltimore, as colleague of Asa Shinn and Robert Burch. The three following years he labored successively at Georgetown, Alexandria, and Frederick. In 1814 he again located, and retired to his estate in Frederick County, Maryland.

Amiable, talented, and devoted, Nicholas Snethen was, nevetheless, versatile and restless. He twice re-

[3] Methodist Protestant, Baltimore, July 12, 1845.

tired from the itinerancy to the local ranks, besides passing through transferences from north to south, remarkable in number and extent, even in that day of frequent and long transitions. Two years he traveled with Asbury, and his regular appointments ranged from Portland in Maine to Charleston, South Carolina. At one time he was the champion defender of Methodism; at another, the most strenuous leader of schism. During the revolt of O'Kelly he published, as has been shown, an "Answer to Mr. O'Kelly's Vindication," in which he defended the Church and Asbury in language the most emphatic; in 1828 he presided at the Convention of Seceders which assembled at Baltimore to organize the "Associated Methodist Churches," now known as the "Protestant Methodist Church;" and during eight previous years he had been writing with great severity (but, doubtless, with equal sincerity) anonymous attacks on the Church, for whose prosperity he had so arduously labored.

The movement which resulted in the secession of 1828, commenced by the publication of the "Wesleyan Repository" in Trenton, N. J., in 1820, and was continued by the violent assaults of the "Mutual Rights" in Baltimore. Snethen was a frequent contributor to these periodicals. He subsequently published his articles in a volume, as also another work in defense of his seceding brethren. He attended the Maryland Convention, in 1827, and prepared the memorial to the next General Conference, which called forth the celebrated Report of the Conference on Lay Representation. He was leader of the Convention which formed the Articles of Association for the new Church, and was afterward elected President of the Maryland Annual Conference District. In 1829 he emigrated to the banks of the

Wabash, near Merom, Sullivan County, Indiana. Domestic bereavements induced him, subsequently, to remove to Louisville, Kentucky. He finally settled in Cincinnati, where he labored assiduously in the ministry. In May, 1838, he presided over the General Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church, assembled at Alexandria, D. C. He also took a prominent part in the deliberations of the same body at Pittsburgh, in 1838, and at Baltimore, in 1842. "The last year or two of his life was spent," says his son, "in building up a new school in Iowa City, in the territory of Iowa. They called it the Snethen Seminary. He opened it in person, and returned to Cincinnati to prepare for it one hundred lectures, which he intended to have delivered with his own lips the ensuing summer. He was on his way to Iowa City when he was taken ill at the residence of his son-in-law, Dr. Pennington, in Princeton, Indiana, where, after two months of great sufferings, he died on the 30th of May, 1845, magnifying and praising the Lord to the last moment of his life."[4]

He was no ordinary man; his literary acquirements were highly respectable; in the pulpit he was eloquent, and at times overpowering; in private life he was cheerful, sociable, and sympathetic; an unwavering friend, and a complete Christian gentleman. There was a peculiarity in his mental constitution to which must be referred his unfortunate course in the Church. "His philosophic mind," says one who knew him well, "delighted in theory. He theorized on every subject that came under his investigation; and most of his theories were ingenious, plausible, and captivating, and bespoke a mind of vast compass, great

[4] Methodist Protestant, July 12, 1845.

originality, and intense application."[5] With such a characteristic propensity, it is no matter of surprise that he finally stumbled at the ecclesiastical system of Methodism. The polity of no other Church, if, indeed, of any other community of men whatever, is more thoroughly practical or less theoretical; it presents an episcopacy which is presbyterian, a pastorate without settlement, a creed almost dangerously liberal, and yet the most rigorously applied in the pulpit; a system, in fine, made up of the most energetic peculiarities and most marked contrasts, its contrasts being, however, but salutary counterparts. No system confers higher powers on its ministry, and yet none places its ministry in more utter subjection to popular control. No ecclesiastical officers, out of the papal hierarchy, have stronger executive functions than its bishops, and yet none have more stringent checks and restrictions. It pretends to no theoretical foundation and no divine right, but is a result of providential circumstances, and having operated more successfully than any other, and with as few, if not fewer, abuses than any other, the good sense of its people, while accepting improvements, has always repelled hasty changes. Snethen and his associates attempted a revolution, with what success I need not here say. The very changes he too impetuously attempted, the Church has, by formal vote, declared itself ready to concede whenever its laity shall generally demand them. Asbury himself predicted their concession in due time. But neither the ministry nor the people were willing to concede them to agitation and strife. Snethen, however sincere his purpose, presents the sad and affecting spectacle of a veteran evangelist—the associate of Lee in New England, the

[5] Rev. J. R. Williams, in Meth. Prot., Baltimore, July 12, 1845.

friend and traveling companion of Asbury, the able defender of the Church against schism, the itinerant who had suffered and labored through most of the land to lay the foundations and rear the walls of the Church —turning from it, and from the thinned ranks of his old fellow-laborers, to head a revolt which was to spread discord and rancor through the goodly brotherhood! Sad, indeed, to see a man so good and great, after a useful ministry of thirty years or more, spend the remainder of his weary and declining life amid the anxieties and reactions of an impracticable experiment, and in conflict with the sympathies and endeared memories of his earlier and better years! He mingles again, we doubt not, with his old itinerant associates, in that world where good men no longer "see through a glass darkly," but "know even as also they are known," and where the best of them will discern errors enough in their past existence to call for mutual sympathy and forgiveness.

We left Lee in the pulpit at Enfield on the evening of the day which closed the Wilbraham Conference. His appointment for the ensuing year was to the office of presiding elder; his district comprehended, nominally, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine, but virtually, the whole Methodist interests in New England. A year of extraordinary travels and labors was before him; but, sustained by a zeal as steady as it was ardent, he went forth upon it like a giant to run a race. He passed in a rapid flight through Connecticut, Rhode Island, Eastern Massachusetts, and far into the interior of Maine, amid snow-drifts and wintry storms; back again through Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and the islands of Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard, and again through Massachusetts and Maine into the British

provinces, and back yet again to the interior of Connecticut.

We have already followed him so closely in his first fields that we have space now only to retrace rapidly his course in the new one of Maine. The winter had set in, and the province was yet "a howling wilderness;" he set out for it on the 3d of November. He preached in Portland, and found a home in the house of a hospitable Quaker, "friend Cobb," who, he says, "was quite reconciled to prayers morning and evening." He left the city, not doubting "but what the Lord would yet favor this people." At Monmouth he saw signs of a revival of religion, and wrote, "Surely the Lord is saying to the North, 'Give up.' Amen, even so: come Lord Jesus."

Philip Wager had been sent this year to Maine—the first Methodist preacher stationed in that section of New England. Lee's delight at the good indications in Monmouth was enhanced by the arrival of Wager, who brought him the cheering news of similar signs in other parts of the province. After conversing and rejoicing over their prospects they went forth to a neighboring tavern, where Lee preached and Wager exhorted, "with freedom," to a company of hearers who expected them; "the Lord," says the former, "moved upon the hearts of many." His joy was increased in meeting, after the sermon, the first Methodist Class formed in Maine, and hearing, "from the people's own mouths, what the Lord had done for their souls." This little band comprised fifteen members. It was organized "about the first of November, 1794."[6] The first lay Methodist in Maine was Daniel Smith, afterward a local preacher. He died in peace, October 10, 1846

[6] Lee's Hist. of Meth., anno 1794.

Lee left the new society, praying that it might be as the "little cloud, which at first was like a man's hand, but soon covered the heavens." His prayer has prevailed, and in our day his denomination has become the strongest, numerically, in the state.

On Saturday, 15th, he reached Readfield, whither he was attracted by the recollections of his former cordial reception. Good news awaited him in that remote region; he found there the second Methodist society of Maine, recently formed—a people hungering for the word of life, and hanging on his ministrations with sobs and ejaculations—and the shell of the first Methodist chapel of Maine already reared. The class consisted of seventeen members. "Surely," he exclaims, "the Lord is about to do great things for the people. Even so; amen, and amen." Early on Wednesday, 26th, he was again pressing forward, on his way to Sandy River, over a lonely road, and through intense cold. In a part of his route he passed through seven or eight miles without seeing a single habitation. "It appeared," he says, "as if my feet would freeze; but I drew one of my mittens over the toe of my shoe, and made out to keep it from freezing."

December, with its borean storms, had come upon the evangelist in what was then the heart of the wilderness province, but he still went forward.

By Wednesday, 3d, he reached, through the woods, the junction of Sandy River and the Kennebec. On a part of the way there were no traces of a path; his guide had to follow the 'chops" on the trees; the snow was nearly a foot deep, and the traveling most difficult. The next day he "rode up the Kennebec, to Mr. James Burn's, at Titcombtown, a little below Seven Miles Brook," where he proclaimed at night that "God sent

his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him." 1 John iv, 9. "They were all attention," he says, "and some of them much wrought upon, so that they could not forbear weeping. They importuned me to come among them again, or try and send one to preach to them, for they seldom hear a sermon of any kind. My heart was moved with compassion for the people. There never was a Methodist preacher in these parts before. Lord, send forth more laborers into thy vineyard, and into this part of the world!" There were sparse settlements scattered about thirty miles higher up the river, but his time was limited; the next day he turned his face toward the south, preached on his way, and recrossed Sandy River on the ice. By the 12th he was again in Readfield. It was a fast day in the infant society, in preparation for what was to be a great occasion among them on the approaching Sabbath—the first consecration of the Lord's Supper by the Methodists of Maine. He preached to them; "there was a considerable move among the people," he says. "I met the class, and consulted about administering the Lord's Supper. One of our friends gave us an agreeable account of a gracious work of God among the people at Sandy River. Lord, increase it abundantly! Sunday, 14th, I preached in Readfield, and administered the Lord's Supper to about eight persons. This was the first time that this ordinance had ever been administered in this town by the Methodists, or in any part of this province. We had a happy time together."

On Tuesday, the 23d, he was preaching in Littleborough, to a crowded congregation, which melted under his word. "Many of the people," he remarks, "could hardly refrain from weeping aloud." Remarkable scenes occurred here. After he had dismissed the

assembly and retired into another room, "a man," he says, "came in to speak to me, and burst into tears. Another came in with tears in his eyes, and begged that I would preach again at night. I could not refuse. Some of the people then went home, but soon returned. One man, being in deep distress, began to cry aloud to God to have mercy upon his poor soul; and thus he continued to cry with all his might, until some of the people were much frightened. I talked, prayed, and sung, and while I was singing a visible alteration took place in his countenance, and I was inclined to think his soul was set at liberty. He afterward spoke as though he believed it was so." But scarcely had this penitent found comfort, when another "was seized with trembling, and began to pray the Lord to have mercy upon his poor soul, and cried aloud for some time." These strange scenes excited much interest among the spectators. Lee immediately opened his Bible and began to address them from 1 Peter v, 7, "Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you;" but soon another man was seized with a violent trembling, and cried aloud. There was weeping through the whole assembly. The preacher's voice was drowned, and he was compelled to stop. He knelt down and prayed for the awakened man, and when quiet was restored resumed his discourse, amid the sobbings of the congregation. "It appeared," he remarks, "as if the whole neighborhood was about to turn to God. I hope the fruit of this meeting will be seen after many days, and that the work of the Lord will revive from this time." He hastened on, witnessing similar scenes, and, early in January, 1795, was again at Lynn.

He had spent about two months in Maine, during which, undaunted by the driving storms of the north,

ne had penetrated on horseback to the frontier settlements, preaching the word, and encouraging the incipient societies, which could yet claim but one sanctuary in the province, and that scarcely more substantial than a barn, but have since multiplied themselves throughout the state, and studded its surface with temples. After laboring two or three weeks in Lynn and its vicinity, he sallied forth again, though amid the blasts of midwinter, on an excursion to Rhode Island, and the southeastern parts of Massachusetts.

Again he sought temporary shelter at his headquarters in Lynn; but though it was now the most inclement period of the year, and especially unfavorable for travel, he longed to plunge again into the wintry wilderness of Maine, and to bear the cross onward far beyond his former tours. He was soon away, and penetrated through the province to the Bay of Fundy. By the 21st of June he was back at Readfield dedicating the first Methodist chapel of Maine.

Such is but a glance at the labors of this wonderful man during the ten months which had elapsed since his departure from the Wilbraham Conference. Similar journeys and labors, performed with our present conveniences for travel, would be considered extraordinary; how much more so were they at that day! How soon would the earth be evangelized were the whole Christian ministry of like spirit! He has recorded, for the satisfaction of later Methodists, the dates of the first sermons by Methodist preachers in several parts of Maine. The first in the province was at Saco, September 10, 1793; in Portland, 12; Hallowell, October 13, Farmington, 15; Readfield, 16; Winthrop, 21; Monmouth, 22; Livermore, January 12, 1794; Chesterville,

21; Vassalborough, March 5; Winslow, 9; Norridgwock, 11; Fairfield, 13.

While Lee was approaching the seat of the next Conference from the north, Asbury was wending his course toward it from the south, where, as we have seen, he had performed unparalleled journeys and labors. He left New York city on the sixth of July, and, entering Connecticut, preached at Stamford in a private house. The next day he rode thirty-three miles to Stratford, where, though weak and depressed, he addressed a multitude which crowded the house inside and out. On Friday, 10, he reached New Haven. His former visit had left a favorable impression. "Nothing would do," he remarks, "but I must preach in Dr. Edwards's meeting-house, which I did from these words: 'Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, my Lord.'" The next day he was at Middletown, and spent a portion of the day in visiting from house to house, and in conducting a prayer-meeting. No labor seemed too great nor too small for his tireless spirit. The following day was the Sabbath. He preached three sermons, two at "The Farms," and one at the Court-house. On Monday, 13, he preached with "some life" at Middle Haddam, and reached New London the next day. The itinerants had been arriving, wayworn and dusty, during the day; but in the evening they gathered around their great champion, who, ever ready, addressed them and the multitude.

The year had been a calamitous one for the Church generally; the Minutes reported an aggregate decrease of six thousand three hundred and seventeen members. "Such a loss," says Lee, "we had never known since we were a people."[8] But while the desolating measures of

[8] Lee's Hist. of Meth., anno 1795.

O'Kelly were blighting the former rich growth of the South, the New England field was extending on every hand, and yielding an abundant increase. Its returns of members amounted to two thousand five hundred and seventy-five, an advance on the preceding year of five hundred and thirty six, or more than one fourth. There was apparently a gain of but one circuit or station, eighteen being reported the preceding year, and nineteen the present. One, however, of the former (Vermont) was merely nominal; Joshua Hall, who was appointed to it, being detained in Massachusetts.[9] The gain was at least five; actually larger than in any former year. The remodeling of several western circuits diminished their number, but their real extent and importance were proportionably augmented by the change. Pomfret, in Connecticut; Provincetown and Marblehead, in Massachusetts; Portland and Penobscot, in Maine, were the new names reported among the appointments for the ensuing year. The gains in the membership were chiefly in Maine. A solitary preacher had been appointed, at the preceding Conference, to that vast field, but no society had then been organized. In the present year Lee, as we have seen, had repeatedly traveled to its farthest boundary. Hundreds were awakened and converted under his faithful labors, and those of his coadjutor. Several societies were organized; the first Methodist chapel erected; the first returns of members made. Readfield Circuit reported 232; Portland, 136; and Passamaquoddy, (on the eastern boundary,) 50; an aggregate of 318. Methodism had unfurled its banners in Maine, with the hope never to strike them till the heavens are no more.

[9] Dr. Bangs's statement respecting Hall's labors in Vermont (Hist. of M. E. Church, anno 1794) is inaccurate.

The Conference at New London, Conn., commenced its session on Wednesday, the 15th of July, 1795. Nineteen preachers were present.[10] A small number of Methodists had been formed into a society in the city about two years, but they were yet without a chapel in which to accommodate the Conference. It met in the house of Daniel Burrows. Though assembled without ostentation, and without a temple, sublime visions of the future rose before the contemplation of the men who composed the unnoticed body. Asbury looked forth from the private room in which they met, with the hope that their deliberations would be "for the good of thousands." Some of them were yet to see their little company grow into a host nearly a thousand strong, leading an evangelical army of nearly a hundred thousand souls. Asbury, Lee, Roberts, Pickering, Mudge, Taylor, Snethen, Smith, Ostrander, and M'Combs were among the rare men who composed the unpretending synod.

The session continued until Saturday. M'Call, from the British Provinces, and Kingston and Harper, Wesleyan missionaries from the West Indies, were present. Some polemical discussions occurred, "especially," says Asbury, "in reference to the ancient contest about baptism, these people being originally connected with those who are of that line." "O what wisdom, meekness, patience, and prudence are necessary," he adds; "great peace," however, prevailed throughout the deliberations. The brethren from the West Indies had arrived with prostrate health and exhausted purses. Asbury expresses his pleasure at seeing "our preachers ready to give their strange brethren a little of the

[10] MS. Sermon of Rev. R. W. Allen. Asbury says "about twenty," Journals, anno 1795.

little they had," a liberality almost universal among Methodist preachers in those days of suffering and self-sacrifice. They reviewed the successes and trials of the past year, planned new and more extended projects of labor for the future, united in frequent prayer that the word might run and be glorified, and preached it daily to each other and the gathered multitude in the court-house. Evan Rogers, who had been educated a Quaker and combined much of the gravity of his first with the warm energy of his new faith, addressed the preachers particularly, and, it is said, very pertinently, on defects in their pulpit delivery, which were not uncommon at that date. His text, at least, was significant. It was 1 Cor. xiv, 19: "Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." [11]

Chalmers brought them glad tidings from Rhode Island, and reported the erection of the first Methodist chapel of that state.[12] Ostrander brought good news from the Connecticut River; the cause was advancing slowly, but surely, along its banks, prejudice was yielding, the hostility of the established Churches had been defeated in several instances, and though the cry was that they were "turning the world upside down," yet numerous places in all directions were uttering to them the "Macedonian cry" to come over and help them, and hundreds were waking from their spiritual slumbers to a devouter life. Hill was there from New Hampshire, to report that innumerable doors were opening in that

[11] Letter of Enoch Mudge to the writer.

[12] It was usual, at this period, for the preachers to "give a free and full account of themselves and their circuits at the Conference." Asbury's Journals, Sept. 22, 1795.

sparsely settled state for the new evangelists; but the laborers were few, and none could yet be spared. Lee, wayworn with his great travels, cheered them with surprising encouragements from Maine: the formation of two new circuits, the organization of the first Methodist Society, and the erection of the first Methodist chapel in the province, together with the report of more than three hundred members received there since the last session of the Conference. Encouraged by their mutual communications they sung a hymn, and bowed together in a concluding prayer, at noon, on Saturday. They tarried, however, through the Sabbath, the great day of the feast. Early on Monday morning, before the community were fairly astir, Asbury was away on his horse, and by eight o'clock A. M. was sounding the alarm in Norwich, while the preachers were urging their steeds in all directions to the conflicts of another year.

The programme of labor for the year, from July, 1795, to September, 1796, included one district and part of a second, nineteen circuits, and thirty preachers. Add to these about two thousand six hundred members, with some half dozen chapels, and we have a general outline of Methodism in New England at this date.

Hitherto I have given abundant notices of the itinerant preachers in these Eastern States. They now become too numerous for such detail. Nearly one third on the list of appointments this year were new laborers in New England. They were nine; and, of all this number, two withdrew from the ministry, and the remainder sooner or later located without again resuming effective service, so far as I can ascertain. It was a sad necessity of the times which compelled so many, at the maturest period of their energies, to seek bread for their

families in secular pursuits. But it was a necessity, nor was the Church culpable for it. Recently organized, existing yet in feeble and scattered bands, composed mostly of the poor, without chapels, and without resources, and almost without friends or sympathy, it was impossible for it to maintain a married ministry. Hence most of the itinerants of that day retired in early manhood. But young men, vigorous in faith and talent, were perpetually rising up to fill the vacated ranks, while, through the admirable economy of the Church, the retiring champions continued their Sabbath labors undiminished, and became the veteran garrisons of local positions throughout the land. Hundreds, too, of the latter, after providing for their families, re-entered the active service with unabated heroism, and fell, at last, with their armor on. The ministry of no Church, since the apostolic age, has presented severer tests of character, and no tests have brought out nobler developments of energy and devotion.

Lee returned to Boston, that he might assist in the ceremonies with which the founding of the Methodist chapel on Hanover Avenue was solemnized. Five years had he been laying siege to the almost inaccessible community of the metropolis, returning to the attack, ever and anon, from his distant excursions; his perseverance had conquered at last, and he now erected a battery in its midst. On the 28th of August he consecrated the corner-stone of the new temple, amid the rejoicings and thanksgivings of the humble worshipers, who had struggled to the utmost for its erection. It was located on a narrow lane in the poorest suburb of the city, but was for years a moral pharos, throwing an evangelical radiance over the population around it. Many of the greatest men of the Methodist ministry

proclaimed the truth from its rude pulpit, and its humble communion has been adorned by some of the best samples of Christian character which have distinguished the denomination. Lee was three weeks in the city; during this time he took his stand, three successive Sabbaths, on the Common, where thousands heard the word of life from his lips, who would have gone no where else to hear it.

Leaving the work in Boston in charge of Harper, he went forth again on his travels, passing with rapid transitions in every direction. The unfortunate loss of his manuscripts[13] has deprived us of the details of these tours. We know, however, that he passed over the whole length of Cape Cod, made two tours in Maine, and seemed almost omnipresent in his older eastern fields.

In September, 1796, Asbury again entered New England. On reaching Old Haddam he wrote, "My body is full of infirmities, and my soul of the love of God. I think that God is returning to this place, and that great days will yet come on in New England." He read aright the signs of the times. He passed on to Thompson, Conn., where the Conference assembled on the 19th. The aggregate of the returns of Church members was now 2,519, showing a decrease of 56. On the other hand there had been a gain of 105 in Maine and New Hampshire, and numerous conversions in Vermont, which were not reported. The real loss was, therefore, probably smaller than it appears to be in the census. But if there was a slight numerical declension, there was an actual growth of the cause in the invigoration of its organized plans, and the extension of its

[13] They were consumed in the burning of the Methodist Book Concern, New York, in 1836.

scope of operations. Its laborers had formed two new circuits in Maine. They had penetrated into New Hampshire and Vermont, and had projected a long circuit in each. Lee had formerly preached the doctrines of Methodism in all the New England states, but before the present year its standards had been planted permanently only in Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Maine; now they were reared, to be furled no more, in all the Eastern states. A network of systematic labors extended into them all, from Norwalk in Connecticut to the Penobscot in Maine, and from Provincetown in Massachusetts to Montpelier in Vermont; and hereafter the progress of the new communion is to advance, as we shall witness, with accelerated rapidity in every direction.

The number of circuits at the beginning of the year was 19; those reported at its conclusion amounted to 21. Two of the former were now merged, however, in neighboring appointments; there was, therefore, an actual gain of four.

At the Thompson, as at the New London Conference, the year before, the itinerants had not the convenience of a chapel for their deliberations, but were entertained with hearty hospitality by the young Church, and assembled in an unfinished chamber in the house of Captain Jonathan Nichols.[14] In this humble apartment did these men of great souls devise plans which comprehended all these states, and contemplated all coming time. About thirty were present, "some of whom," remarks Asbury, "were from the province of Maine, three hundred miles distant, who gave us a pleasing relation of the work of God in those parts." He preached to them in the chamber, enjoining upon

[14] Letter of Rev. H. S. Ramsdel to the writer.

them their ministerial duties to the people, from Acts xxvi, 18, 19: "To open their eyes, and to turn them from the power of Satan unto God; that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are justified." The sermon was heard with deep emotion by a crowded assembly, among whom sat the parish pastor, rapt in the interest of the occasion. To a late day its effect was often mentioned among the reminiscences of the olden times in the conversations of veteran Methodists. "We talked together, and rejoiced in the Lord," says Asbury. Enoch Mudge and Joshua Hall brought them refreshing reports from Maine. The former had witnessed the rapid spread of the gospel along the banks of the Kennebec, where an additional circuit had been formed; the latter had been proclaiming it on both sides of the Penobscot, and had seen "the arm of the Lord made bare." They could both tell of hard fare, terrible winters, long journeys amid driving storms, and comfortless lodgings in log-cabins, through which the snow beat upon their beds; but also of divine consolations which had sanctified every suffering, and victories of the truth multiplying through the land. Lemuel Smith relieved the reports of declension from Massachusetts and Connecticut by news of an extensive revival on Granville Circuit, where nearly one hundred souls had been gathered into the Church since their last session. Lawrence M'Coombs reported severe combats and serious losses on New London Circuit, but was undaunted in his characteristic courage and sanguine hopes. Cyrus Stebbins brought the mournful intelligence that one of their number had fallen in the field since they last met, the youthful and devoted Zadok Priest. Asbury ordained seven deacons and five elders; three itinerants, compelled, probably, by sick

ness or want, took leave of their itinerant brethren and retired to the local ranks; but others, mightier men—Timothy Merritt, John Broadhead, Elijah Woolsey, etc.—stepped into their places, and the New England Methodist ministry presented a more imposing aspect of strength than had yet distinguished it. A man, subsequently noted throughout the nation, presented himself for admission among them, the eccentric Lorenzo Dow; but the discerning eye of Asbury perceived the peculiarity of his character, and his application was declined. He lingered about the place during the session, weeping sincere tears. "I took no food," he says, "for thirty-six hours afterward." On Wednesday the little band again dispersed, to sound the alarm through the length and breadth of the Eastern states.

Twenty-one circuits, one district, and a large portion of a second, together with thirty-one itinerant laborers and 2,519 members, constituted the force of New England Methodism for the year 1796–7.

CHAPTER IX.

METHODISM IN THE WEST—1792–1796.

Review — Asbury again among the Mountains — His Hardships — John Cooper the first Itinerant appointed to the West — His Colleague Samuel Breese — Henry Willis — His Sufferings, Persistent Labors, and Character — Moriarty, Tunnell, and Poythress — The Frontier at this Period — Smith and Boone in the Wilderness — Extreme Hardships of the Pioneer Itinerants — Character and Condition of the Settlers — Methodism saves them from Barbarism — Barnabas M'Henry enters the Field — The first Methodist Itinerant raised up in the West — His Labors — Anecdotes — His Death by Cholera — His Character — William Burke — Perils from Indians — Perils in the Wilderness with Asbury — Martyred Local Preachers — Burke's Trials and Services — John Kobler — Judge Scott — His Early Labors — He receives into the Church Dr. Tiffin — Sketch of Tiffin — His first Preaching — Scott meets him in the West — Tiffin's Usefulness — Mrs. Tiffin — Tiffin becomes the first Governor of Ohio — His Character — Scott's Success — Francis M'Cormick, Founder of Methodism in Ohio — Sketch of his Life — Henry Smith's Western Adventures — Major M'Coloch — Valentine Cook — Asbury again in the West — Review.

I HAVE recorded, with some detail, the early trans-Alleghany movements of Methodism from the labors of the local preacher, Robert Wooster, in the Redstone country, in 1781, down to the General Conference of 1792. We have witnessed the outspread of the Church in the then frontier regions now comprised in the Erie, Pittsburgh, and Western Virginia Conferences, the designation of Lambert to the Holston country, in 1783,[1] the crossing of the Alleghanies, the

[1] The reader has noticed that my allusions to this early appointment have not been very positive. There seems to be no evidence, besides the recorded appointment, that Lambert went thither. Returns of its

same year, by Poythress; the first Western Conference, held among the Holston mountains, in 1788; the arrival in Kentucky of its first itinerants, Haw and Ogden, in 1786; Asbury's adventurous expeditions over the mountains; the first Kentucky Conference in 1790, and the perils and labors of the early evangelists, Poythress, Cooper, Breeze, Haw, Ogden, Moriarty, Wilson Lee, Fidler, Phoebus, Chieuvrant, Matthews, Lurton, Willis, Ware, Tunnell, Maston, Bruce, M'Gee, Burke, Whitaker, Moore, Williamson, M'Henry, Tucker, Birchett, Massie, Daniel Asbury, and others; names which should never be forgotten in the West, for these men laid the foundations not merely of a sect, but of a moral empire in that most magnificent domain of the new world.

On the 27th of March, 1793, the apostolic bishop of Methodism, after a laborious tour over the South, through which we have followed him, set his face again toward the far off pioneers, so dear to him alike by their sufferings and their chivalric character. "We began," he says, "our journey over the great ridge of mountains. We had not gone far before we saw and felt the snow; the sharpness of the air gave me a deep cold, not unlike an influenza. We came to the head of Watauga River, where we proclaimed to the settlers, 'the promise is to you and to your children.' My soul," he adds, "felt for these neglected people. It may be, by my coming this way, Providence will so order it that I shall send them a preacher. We hasted on to Cove's Creek, invited ourselves to stay at C.'s,

members were made before the appointment. Appointments were very uncertain in those days, the appointees being often sent elsewhere. I have increasing doubts that Lambert was the first trans-Alleghany Methodist itinerant. It seems more probable that this honor belongs to Poythress. Compare vol. ii, pp. 346–7 and 537. At least Poythress crossed the Alleghanies in the same year that Lambert did.

where we made our own tea, obtained some butter and milk, and some most excellent Irish potatoes. We were presented with a little flax for our beds, on which we spread our coats and blankets, and three of us slept before a large fire. Thursday, 28, we made an early start, and came to the Beaver Dam. Three years ago we slept here in a cabin without a cover. We made a breakfast, and then attempted the iron or stone mountain, which is steep like the roof of a house. I found it difficult and trying to my lungs to walk up it. Descending it, we had to jump down the steep stairs from two to three and four feet. At the foot of this mountain our guide left us to a man on foot; he soon declined, and we made the best of our way to Dugger's Ford on Roan's Creek. We came down the river, where there are plenty of large, round, rolling stones, and the stream was rapid. My horse began to grow dull; an intermittent fever and a deep cold disordered me much. I was under obligations to Henry Hill, my new aid, who was ready to do anything for me in his power. Perhaps Providence moved him to offer to travel with me, and his father to recommend him. Twenty years ago a rude, open loft did not affect me; now it seldom fails to injure me."

On the twenty-ninth they were in Tennessee. "We passed," he says, "Doe River at the fork, and came through the Gap; a most gloomy scene, not unlike the Shades of Death in the Alleghany Mountain. My way opens, and I think I shall go to Kentucky. Tuesday, April 2, our Conference began at Nelson's, near Jonesborough, in the new territory. We have only four or five families of Methodists here. We had sweet peace in our Conference."

On the fifth he rode to Nolachucky. "We have

formed a society in this place," he says, "of thirty-one members, most of them new. There are appearances of danger on the road to Kentucky; but the Lord is with us. We have formed a company of nine men, (five of whom are preachers,) who are well armed and mounted." "As they departed," he continues, "a whisky toper gave me a cheer of success as one of John Wesley's congregation. I came on through heavy rains, over bad hills and poor ridges, to Brother Vanpelt's, on Lick Creek; he is brother to Peter, my old, first friend on Staten Island. I was weary, damp, and hungry; but had a comfortable habitation, and kind, loving people, who heard, refreshed, and fed me. We had a large congregation at Vanpelt's Chapel, where I had liberty in speaking. If reports be true, there is danger in journeying through the wilderness; but I do not fear; we go armed. If God suffer Satan to drive the Indians on us, if it be his will, he will teach our hands to war and our fingers to fight and conquer. Monday, 8, our guard appeared, fixed and armed for the wilderness. We proceeded on to the main branch of Holston, which, being swelled, we crossed in a flat; thence to R.'s, where I found the reports relative to the Indians were true: they had killed the post, and one or two more, and taken some prisoners. I had not much thought or fear about them. Tuesday, 9, we came off: there were only eight in our company, and eight in the other; two women and three children. I went to Robinson's station, where the soldiers behaved civilly. We gave them two exhortations, and had prayer with them. They honored me with the swinging hammock, (a bear skin,) which was as great a favor to me as the governor's bed; here I slept well."

On the tenth they entered Kentucky, and began to

hold frequent quarterly meetings, riding often thirty or forty miles a day without food from morning till night. "I cannot," he remarks, "stand quarterly meetings every day. None need desire to be an American bishop upon our plan for the ease, honor, or interest that attends the office. From my present views and feelings, I am led to wish the Conference would elect another bishop, who might afford me some help. Tuesday, 16th, rode thirty miles without food for man or horse. I was uncomfortable when I came into the neighborhood of W.'s. There is a falling away among the people. Lord, help me to bear up in the evil day! Let me not disquiet myself, and kill man and horse in vain."

Throughout these and all his other labors and outward distractions, we find continual evidence of his devout watchfulness over his inner life. In spite of frequent attacks of his constitutional dejection, perhaps as the sanctified effect of this chronic trial, his soul soars above surrounding harassments to an etherial region of peace and prayer. "My winter's clothing," he writes, "the heat of the weather, and my great exertions in traveling, cause me to be heavy with sleep; yet, blessed be God! I live continually in his presence, and Christ is all in all to my soul." Such are not rare ejaculations; they breathe through all the long record of his great life.

By the last day of April he reached Lexington, where the Conference began immediately, and lasted three days, "in openly speaking our minds to each other." He adds: "We ended under the melting, praying, praising power of God. We appointed trustees for the school, and made sundry regulations relative thereto: we read the Form of Discipline through, section by section, in Conference. Friday, 3d, I preached on Habakkuk iii, 2.

I first pointed out the distinguishing marks of a work of God; second, the subjects; third, the instruments; fourth, the means. If ever I delivered my own soul, I think I have done it this day. Some people were moved in an extraordinary manner, shouting and jumping at a strange rate. Saturday, 4th, came to Bethel to meet the trustees [of the school there.] Sunday, 5th, we had an awful time while I opened and applied 'Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.' It was a feeling, melting time, among old and young; and I am persuaded good was certainly done this day. I feel a good deal tried in spirit, yet, blessed be God! I still have peace within; God is all to me: I want more faith to trust him with my life, and all I have and am. Tuesday, 7, we rode down to the Crab Orchard, where we found company enough, some of whom were very wild: we had a company of our own, and refused to go with them. Some of them gave us very abusive language; and one man went upon a hill above us, and fired a pistol toward us. We resolved to travel in order, and bound ourselves by honor and conscience to support and defend each other, and to see every man through the wilderness. But we could not depend upon wicked and unprincipled men, who would leave and neglect us, and even curse us to our faces. Nor were we at liberty to mix with swearers, liars, drunkards; and, for aught we know, this may not be the worst with some. We were about fourteen or fifteen in company, and had twelve guns and pistols. We rode on near the defeated camp, and rested till three o'clock under great suspicion of Indians: we pushed forward; and by riding forty-five miles on Wednesday, and about the same distance on Thursday, we came safe to Robinson's Station, about eight o'clock

Friday, 10th, we rode leisurely from the edge of the wilderness, crossed Holston, and about one o'c ock came to Brother E.'s, it being about sixteen miles." The next day he was again in Tennessee at his friend Vanpelt's, with whom he rested on the Sabbath. "I have traveled," he adds, "between five and six hundred miles in the last four weeks, and have rested from riding fifteen days, at Conferences and other places. I have been much distressed with this night work—no regular meals nor sleep; and it is difficult to keep up prayer in such rude companies as we have been exposed to; I have also been severely afflicted through the whole journey." By the 18th he was at Russell's mansion, mourning, as we have seen, the death of the General, but preaching with power beneath the roof of the bereaved home.

He passed on, in one of those hardly less laborious northern journeys over which we have already traced him, and did not recross the mountains for nearly two years.

Not a few characters meriting perpetual commemoration have already appeared in the Western itinerancy. We have seen that John Cooper and Samuel Breese were the first regular preachers sent to the Redstone country, whither they went in 1784, following in the tracts of Robert Wooster. John Cooper was the humble but memorable evangelist whose sufferings we have noticed as early as 1775, when he was the colleague of Philip Gatch, (one of the two first native Methodist preachers of America,) on Kent circuit, Maryland—a man "who," Gatch says, "had suffered much persecution," for as has been recorded, his family violently opposed him for becoming a Methodist, and his father, detecting him on his knees, at prayer, threw

a shovel of hot coals upon him, and expelled him from his house. He took up his cross, joined the itinerant host, and here we find him at last, the first appointed standard bearer of the Church beyond the Pennsylvania Alleghanies, the first regularly appointed one in the valley of the Mississippi, if the doubtful designation of Lambert to the Holston country, the preceding year, did not take effect, as I deem very probable. Alas, that we must say so little of such a man! And yet, how much does that little mean! He was admitted to the Conference in 1775, and labored in Maryland, Philadelphia, New Jersey, Virginia, North Carolina, and Western Pennsylvania, and died in 1789; and the Minutes, with their then usual laconicism, gave him, evidently by the pen of Asbury, two sentences, but these were full of significance. "John Cooper, fifteen years in the work; quiet, inoffensive, and blameless; a man of affliction, subject to dejection, sorrow, and suffering; often in want, but too modest to complain till observed and relieved by his friends. He died in peace!"

Of his colleague, Samuel Breese,[2] we know still less. He joined the Conference in 1783, traveled ten years in Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania, and located in 1793.

Henry Willis was appointed to Holston in 1784, the next year after Lambert's appointment. We have heretofore often met him.[3] He was the first preacher stationed in Charleston, South Carolina, and was probably the first who had an effective appointment in the Holston mountains. Sinking under pulmonary con-

[2] Following Quinn, I was led, in vol. ii, p. 333, into the mistake of calling this preacher Solomon Breese; the Minutes name him Samuel. Probably a typographical error escaped in Quinn's book.

[3] See particularly vol. ii, pp. 51, 347.

sumption, he nevertheless persisted in his travels through years of suffering, and was one of the most dominant spirits of the times, energizing by his irrepressible ardor the work of the Church throughout two thirds of its territory. He labored mightily for the West, as if conscious of its prospective importance in the State and the Church. In 1785 he had charge as presiding elder of a district which, comprehending much of North Carolina, reached far into the Holston country. In 1786 he was in Charleston, South Carolina; in 1787 in New York city; 1788, presiding elder of New York district; 1789, of a district which extended from Philadelphia to Redstone and Pittsburgh, bringing him again prominently into the trans-Alleghany field; in 1790 he located, but hardly abated his labors; the next three years he was again in the effective ranks in Philadelphia, with John Dickins. He was compelled to locate again. In 1796 he reappears in Baltimore with John Haggerty, Nelson Reed, and other worthies; here he seems to have remained till 1800, when he became a supernumerary, doing what service he could, mostly on the Frederick circuit, near his home, till his death in 1808, near Strawbridge's old church, on Pipe Creek. We have seen Ware's high estimate of him, and Asbury mourning at his grave as over one of the noblest men he had ever known. Quinn, who knew him in the Redstone country, describes him as about "six feet in stature," "slender," a "good English scholar," "well read," "an eloquent man, mighty in the Scriptures, and a most profound and powerful reasoner. He became feeble in the prime of life, retired from the itinerant field, married, and settled on a farm near Frederick county, Maryland. The Baltimore Conference sat in his parlor in April, 1801. In this neighborhood Robert Straw-

bridge raised his first society. At this Conference William Watters re-entered the work—having been local for some years—and was ordained elder. Willis lingered on a few more years in pain, then fell asleep and was gathered to his fathers."

Peter Moriarty has already been sketched as a laborer in the Southern, Northern, and Eastern States,[4] a man of great power. He also shared in the pioneer evangelization of the West, entering the Redstone country as early as 1785, with John Fidler and Wilson Lee, the latter of whom has also appeared repeatedly before us in most of the field. They were then the only itinerants on that side of the Alleghanies, except Henry Willis and the two preachers on his solitary Holston circuit. We have seen John Tunnell leading, for years, a pioneer band of preachers among the Holston mountains,[5] and buried, at last, by Asbury, among the Alleghany heights, a martyr to his work. We have also traced Poythress to the great western arena, where he became one of its most conspicuous champions, and broke down, physically and mentally, under superabundant labors, as we shall hereafter have occasion to record.

Though examples of the privations and perils of these pioneer evangelists have repeatedly been given in the course of our narrative, they can hardly be appreciated in our age. The itinerants in the Redstone country stood upon the frontier confronting the immense wilderness known as the Northwestern Territory. The scattered settlers had been slowly creeping across the mountains on the Braddock Military Road. Fort Pitt (Fort du Quesne) stood not far off, a memorial of French military adventure. A few huts nestled under its shelter; but Pittsburgh was not to be incorporated

[4] Vol. ii, p. 106. [5] Vol. ii, p. 35.

as a borough till a quarter of a century after the arrival of Wooster. The itinerants formed a circuit called Ohio, as has been remarked, but it extended along the eastern bank of the river. The great wilderness gave no certain signs yet of the magnificent states which were soon to rise on its surface: Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, and others, stretching to the Mississippi, and overleaping it to the Rocky Mountains. The evangelists looked across the Ohio with vague though sublime anticipations of the moral empire they were about to found in the boundless wilds. The first permanent settlement in Ohio, Marietta, was not made till 1788, seven years after Wooster began to preach in the Redstone region, and four after Cooper and Breese began their regular labors on the hither side of the Ohio River. More than twenty years were yet to pass, after Wooster's arrival, before Ohio was to become a state, thirty-five years before Indiana, and thirty-seven before Illinois. The itinerants in the more southern trans-Alleghany field, the "Holston Country," from their mountainous position, and their exposure to the Cherokees, were in even a more desolate region. "Straggling settlements" had been slowly extending, from the locality of Pittsburgh, up the Monongahela and its branches to the Greenbrier and the Neuse Rivers, where we have seen Asbury in some of his most romantic adventures. Thence they had reached to the upper valley of the Holston, "where the military path of Virginia led to the country of the Cherokees."[6] Only seventeen years before the Methodist preachers penetrated to this valley, James Smith, accompanied by three fellow-adventurers, passed through it into Kentucky, then

[6] Bancroft vi, 34; Day's Hist. Coll. of Pennsylvania, 336; Monette's Hist. of Disc., etc., in Valley of Mississippi, i, 345.

without a single settlement; pushing down the Cumberland he reached the Ohio and the mouth of the Tennessee, but left no trace of his passage except the name of one of his little band, Stone, which he gave to a stream above the site of Nashville.[7] Only about ten years (1773) before the appearance of the itinerants on the Holston, and but eleven before Methodist local preachers penetrated Kentucky, Daniel Boone, the "illustrious pioneer," after previous surveys, commenced his settlement of the latter county with six families, and began a road from the settlements on the Holston to the Kentucky River, harassed by the savages, who killed four of his men, and wounded as many more.

By our present period the current of emigration had strongly set in toward these western paradises, as they were esteemed, and as, in all natural attractions, they were worthy to be esteemed. But the privations and other sufferings of the first settlers were as yet only aggravated by the new accessions of population. The savages were rendered the more alarmed and relentless by the increasing probability of the inundation of their domain by the white race, and ambuscades and massacres prevailed everywhere. Asbury, as we have seen, had to travel with armed convoys, and keep anxious watch by night, and his preachers pursued their mountainous routes in continual hazard of their lives. Their fare was the hardest; the habitations of the settlers were log-cabins, clinging to the shelter of "stations," or stockaded "block-houses." The preachers lived chiefly on Indian corn and game. They could get little or no money, except what their brethen (themselves poor) of the more eastern Conferences could send them by

[7] Bancroft, vi, 34.

Asbury. They wore the coarsest clothing, often tattered or patched. Their congregations gathered at the stations with arms, with sentinels stationed around to announce the approach of savages, and were not unfrequently broken up, in the midst of their worship, by the alarm of the warwhoop and the sound of muskets. The population was generally, though not universally, of the rudest character; much of it likely to sink into barbarism had it not been for the gospel so persistently borne along from settlement to settlement by these unpaid and self-sacrificing men. We have already shown, from a contemporary author, that bankrupts, refugees from justice, deserters of wives and children, and all sorts of reckless adventurers, hastened to these wildernesses. It was soon demonstratively evident that the "itinerancy" was a providential provision for the great moral exigencies of this new, this strange, this vast western world, almost barricaded by mountains from the Christian civilization of the Atlantic states, but not barricaded from the civilizing power of Christianity as embodied in the indomitable ministry of Methodism. The preachers, many of whom had come from comfortable Eastern families, some of whom were men of no little intelligence and refinement, saw the sublime importance of their frontier work in contrast with its extreme privations and humiliations, and shrank not from their mission. They became "all things to all men;" while astonishing the people with their rare eloquence, they won their sympathies, their admiration, their intimate and hearty fellowship, by proving that they could chivalrously share their perils from savages, and enjoy the rude but romantic life of their cabins and stockades. A Methodist preacher, than whom no one knew more of the early West, says of these times that

"the backwoodsman usually wore a hunting-shirt and trowsers made of buckskin, and moccasins of the same material. His cap was made of coonskin, and sometimes ornamented with a fox's tail. The ladies dressed in linsey-woolsey, and sometimes buckskin."[8] The comparatively few, of the higher classes, sported the eastern "fashions" of the times as best they could, but the people generally were extremely self-negligent. Many of the cabins, as Asbury has shown us, were filthy, and hardly habitable; drunkenness prevailed, and weapons were habitually carried, and too readily used. But Methodism quickly pervaded this imperiled population, like leaven, and it is hardly too much to say that it effected the moral salvation of the West.

It was among such scenes that the itinerants carried the cross, and soon bore it to the very front of emigration, leading with it the rude but triumphant popular march.

These first evangelists were immediatly followed by some of the strongest men of the ministry. Barnabas M'Henry entered the great field as early as 1789, and lives yet in its traditions as one of its most notable ecclesiastical founders. He has the peculiar honor of being the first Methodist preacher raised up west of the Mountains.[9]

He was born December 10, 1767, in Eastern Virginia, but in his tenth year his family emigrated to the west of the Virginia Mountains. In his fifteenth year, about two years before the organization of the Methodist

[8] Finley's Autobiography, p. 96.

[9] I have here to correct an error into which I was led by a citation from Quinn, in vol. ii, p. 340, where John Doddridge, of Western Pennsylvania, who afterward became a Protestant Episcopal clergyman, is said to have been the first Methodist preacher raised up in the West. M'Henry, 'who was faithful to the end," preceded him in the itinerancy one year.

Episcopal Church, he was converted under the labors of a pioneer Methodist preacher, who had penetrated to his distant home.[10] He joined the itinerancy in 1787, when not twenty years old. His superior natural powers, improved with the utmost assiduity, gave him almost immediately a commanding influence, and, after traveling two years, he was made an elder, and in two years more a presiding elder. Bishop Bascom, who knew him long and intimately, says: "He was early remarkable for an admirable acquaintance with theology, and a felicitous use of language in the pulpit. In both his excellence was beyond dispute, and so conversant was he with the whole range of theology as usually taught in the pulpit, and so accurately acquainted with the laws and structure of the English language especially, that his judgments, with those who knew him, had the force of law on these subjects. In the Greek of the New Testament he subequently became quite a proficient, while his less perfect knowledge of Hebrew and Latin enabled him to consult authorities with great facility." His first circuit was on the Yadkin, and extended from the eastern slope of the mountains down into North Carolina; but in 1788 he was sent to the Cumberland Circuit, comprising a great range of country in Southern Kentucky and Tennessee. He became a chieftain of Western Methodism, braving its severest trials, and leading, on immense districts, bands of its ministerial pioneers. His excessive labors broke him down in 1795, and he retired to a farm

[10] Bishop Bascom's Sketch of M'Henry in the Southern Methodist Quarterly Review, 1849, p. 415. Bascom does not say whether the "pioneer preacher" was a local or itinerant one. In either case the facts, if accurate in date, show that Methodism reached this region a year earlier than is usually supposed, thus confirming my conjecture in vol. ii, 347. Finley (Sketches of Western Methodism) says, "M'Henry was among the first fruits of Western Methodism."

near Springfield, Washington County, Ky., whence, however, he continued his ministry, as he had strength, in all the surrounding country, and sometimes to remote distances. He also established a school, in which he successfully taught, for he appreciated the importance of education to the young commonwealth rising around him. "In this way," says his episcopal biographer, "he continued steadily to wield a most enviable influence in every circle in which he was known, and it was during this period he contributed so largely to the establishment and reputation of the Church in Kentucky. His character commanded universal respect. His influence was felt wherever he was known personally or by reputation. It was generally conceded that no minister in the state, of whatever denomination, occupied higher intellectual or moral rank. Many of the most influential men in the state were his friends, associates, and correspondents. From the period of his location until he again joined the traveling connection, the ministry of the Church especially, in all its grades, largely shared his hospitality, counsels, and confidence; and in his quiet retirement and unobtrusive habits of life at 'Mount Pleasant,' he continued to devote himself to the great interests of practical godliness and the common weal of all about him. Whether in the bosom of his family or a circle of friends, in the pulpit or the school-room, on his farm or in his study, he was the same uniform example of devotion to the best interests of humanity." His superior self-culture enabled him to wield a powerful pen for his people, and in 1812 he vindicated them against the printed attacks of two western clergymen, in a pamphlet of marked ability, containing "passages worthy of the pen of Horsely."

He resumed his itinerant labors in 1818, and con-

tinued them, in important western appointments, till 1824, when he was returned "superannuated," in which honored relation to the Conference he remained till his death, seven years later. His ministry extended through forty-six years, twenty-three of them in the itinerancy, and twenty-three in the local ranks. Like most of the itinerants of his day, he left few or no records of his frontier life, but his biographer speaks of "the cherished traditions of the beauty, unction, and eloquence of his preaching, together with the dangers and hardships to which he was exposed as a pioneer missionary in the wilderness of the West. The noble band of his associates, too, what do we know of them! How eminently worthy of preservation is this part of the history of the Church in the West, especially Kentucky and Tennessee. The exposure and suffering, the adventures and hair-breadth escapes of M'Henry, Lee, Kobler, Cook, Ogden, Burke, Garrett, and others, would alone furnish a modern Tasso with matter for an epic. We have heard many startling incidents connected with 'these early times,' related by M'Henry, Cook, Burke, Garrett, and others, their associates. On one occasion, remaining over night at the cabin of a friend in the wilderness, after the family had retired, M'Henry spent two or three hours reading at a table by candle light, with the door of the cabin partly open. The next night the Indians murdered this whole family, and stated that they had gone to the cabin to effect the purpose the night before, but finding the door open and a light within, they supposed the inmates were prepared for an attack, and postponed the execution of their purpose until circumstances should appear more favorable. On another occasion, passing the night at the house of his future father-in-law, Col. Hardin, the Indians presented themselves in force, and

carried off every horse on the plantation except M'Henry's, which happened to be apart from the rest, and was not found by them. It was no uncommon thing for the men of whom we speak to be found camping out at night, amid the gloom of forest solitudes, surrounded by the Indians, and the next day at a distance of fifteen or twenty miles preaching to the frontier settlers in their cabins, forts, or block-houses, as the case might be. The track, the trail, the yell of the Indian, his camp-fire and the crack of his rifle; watching by day and sleeping under guard at night, were with these men almost ordinary occurrences. Would we could do justice to the memory of men so fearless and abundant in labor, and at the same time illustrious in talent and virtue. Among all these M'Henry held eminent rank, and well and nobly did he 'serve his generation by the will of God.' The great theme of his ministrations, for several years before his death, was holiness of heart and life, essential and attainable, as the proper finish of Christain character, and the only preparation for the rewards of immortality. And how beautifully did his life exemplify his faith! His death, too, how calmly peaceful, under circumstances the most appalling! On Sabbath, the 9th of June, 1833, the cholera appeared in Springfield, four miles from his residence, and with such violence that by little after noon of the next day, in a population of only a few hundreds, there had been some thirty cases, and ten or twelve deaths. He went to town early Monday morning, and spent the day with the sick and the dying. On Tuesday he repeated his visit, and again on Wednesday. On Thursday he visited some of his immediate neighbors, among whom the cholera had appeared. On Friday morning he was attacked himself. The attack, however, did not appear

to be violent; once or twice he was sensibly relieved, and for several hours after the attack it was thought he could recover. He suffered very little, but toward evening was found to be sinking rapidly, and at one o'clock, Saturday morning, the 15th of June, he expired. Mrs. M'Henry, who was attacked about noon of Friday, and who appeared to suffer almost beyond expression, required the attention of the only members of the family present so constantly, that he said but little during his last hours, except to give occasional directions, answer inquiries, and express a wish, in a whisper to one of his daughters, as to the place of his burial. His whole manner indicated the most perfect mental repose. No alarm or excitement of any kind, and yet the most touching manifestations of sympathy with his dying wife and anguished children; fit termination this of the life he had lived! tranquil and full of hope! Mrs. M'Henry, assuring all of confidence in God, and that she felt sustained by his grace, died a few hours after him, and husband and wife rest together in the same grave. The next day, Sabbath the 16th, a daughter and grand-daughter fell victims to the same destroyer, and a common grave received their uncoffined forms; laid there by kindred hands, to be followed by yet another victim, the youngest daughter, only three days after. What a dispensation of events in a single family in less than one short week!" But to the anguish of that terrible death-scene succeeded "the rest that remains for the people of God."

Our Western biographical and historical books abound in allusions to M'Henry as a champion of the ministry. A distinguished Kentucky statesman[11] says, "I have known and admired many ministers of different denominations;

[11] Hon. John Rowan, in Sprague, p. 144.

but the only man I have ever known, who even reminded me of my ideal of an apostle, was Barnabas M'Henry."

In his advanced life, mature in character, and generally revered, he was one of the most influential men of his Church and State. He was low in stature, "square built, with a Grecian rather than a Roman face," [12] with heavy eyebrows, a sallow complexion, and a singularly frank, generous, and noble physiognomy. His mind was remarkably well balanced. Though characteristically modest, he was always intrepidly self-possessed. "Indeed," says a high authority, "if I were to mention any trait in his character as more strongly marked than any other, it would be the perfect self-possession which he always evinced under the most vexatious and disturbing circumstances. You could not place him in any situation which would be an overmatch either for his composure or his sagacity; however difficult the case might seem, you might be sure that he would betray no trepidation or embarrassment, and that he would be ready with some suggestion that was fitted to give to the point in debate a new and better direction. He was no doubt indebted for this uncommon and very valuable facility partly to the original structure of his mind, and partly to a habit of long-continued and vigorous self-discipline." [13]

In the year 1792 Western Methodism reported three districts, two in Western Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee, under Poythress and M'Henry, with such men as Wm. Burke, Wilson Lee, Henry Birchett, John Kobler, John Lindsey, and Stith Mead on their circuits; and one in Western Pennsylvania, under Amos Thompson, with Thornton Fleming, Daniel Hitt, and Valentine Cook as preachers.

[12] Bishop Morris, in Sprague. [13] Ibid.

William Burke we have already presented on the scene, and obtained from him some of its earliest reminiscences.[14] Few men saw harder service there than he. In the very outset his circuit led him through the thickest perils of Indian warfare.[15] On his second round a Cherokee war was just breaking out. After he had crossed the French Broad and Little Rivers, and arrived at the extreme point of the settlement, he found the inhabitants in general alarm. He preached that day, and at night the whole neighborhood collected, bringing intelligence that the Indians were in the settlement. In the morning he started for his next appointment, on the south bank of Little River, having a guard of two brothers, who piloted him through the woods part of the way, but becoming alarmed for the safety of their families, left him to make his way alone. He arrived a little before noon, but found it would be impossible to collect a congregation. The people were moving in, and concentrating at a certain point, for the purpose of fortifying, and by night they were the frontier house. After dark the lights were all put out, and each one sat down with his gun on his lap. One of the company started about nine o'clock to go where the Indians had collected; but soon returned, and said they were all through the neighborhood.

Burke immediately determined to make his journey to the next preaching place, which was about ten miles. He was obliged to travel under cover of the night, and had only a small path, and the river to cross, and an island to reach in the river. The night was dark, the timber very thick on the island, and he could not pre-

[14] Vol. ii, p. 355.

[15] See his autobiography in Finley's "Sketches of Western Methodism."

vail on any of the people to leave the house or give him any assistance. "However," he says, "I put my trust in God, and set off." After having passed over a part of his route, he had to alight from his horse, and keep the path on foot. He succeeded, reached the shore at the proper point, and proceeded without difficulty. About two o'clock he arrived at the house where his appointment was for that day, knocked at the door, and sought admittance, but found no inmates. He knew there were cabins on the opposite side of a marsh, and he commenced hallooing as loud as he could. Soon some men came out, who wished to know who he was, and what he wanted. They suspected that the Indians wished to decoy them, and were preparing to give him "a warm reception of powder and lead," when the lady at whose house the itinerants usually preached came out and recognized his voice. They then came over and conducted him to the place where the whole neighborhood was collected, surprised to find that the terrible dangers of the region could not deter the evangelists from their labors. The next day he was away again, and, recrossing the French Broad River, was beyond the reach of immediate danger. He passed up through the circuit, leaving the frontier appointments, which were Pine Chapel, and Little and Big Pigeon, on the south side of the river; and the first intelligence he had from that quarter was that all the inhabitants in the neighborhood of the Pine Chapel were massacred in one night.

The next year he labored chiefly on Clinch Circuit, "a frontier one," he says, "of three weeks, where I was alone, without even a local preacher to help me;" but he had a "good revival," though many conflicts, in a new country, with Indian "warfare going on all the winter on the southern borders." He started in this year, for the

Annual Conference, still further westward, in Kentucky, and gives us some idea of Asbury's episcopal journeys in the wilderness. M'Henry and other preachers accompanied him, making, with some lay adventurers and "friends," who were to convoy them, a company of sixteen. "We were all armed," he says, "except the bishop. It was about one hundred and thirty miles through the wilderness, with but one house in Powell's Valley, where we stayed the first night. Next morning, by sunrise, we crossed Cumberland Mountain, and entered into the heart of the wilderness. I will here introduce a plan that Asbury suggested before we left the settlements. It was to make a rope long enough to tie to the trees all around the camp, when we stopped at night, except a small passage for us to retreat, should the Indians surprise us; the rope to be so fixed as to strike the Indians below the knee, in which case they would fall forward, and we would retreat into the dark and pour in a fire upon them from our rifles. We accordingly prepared ourselves with the rope, and placed it on our pack-horse. We had to pack on the horses we rode corn sufficient to feed them for three days, and our own provisions, besides our saddle-bags of clothes. Through the course of the day nothing material transpired till very late in the afternoon, when, passing up a stony hollow from Richland Creek, at the head of which was the war-path from the northern Indians to the southern tribes, we heard, just over the point of a hill, a noise like a child crying in great distress. We soon discovered that Indians were there, and the reason why they used that stratagem to decoy us was, that, a few days before, they had defeated a company, known for a long time as M'Farland's defeat, and a number were killed, and several children were supposed to be lost

in the woods. We immediately put whip to our horses, and in a few minutes crossed the ridge and descended to Camp Creek about sunset, when we called a halt to consult on what was best to be done, and, on putting it to a vote whether we should proceed on our journey, all were for proceeding but one of the preachers, who said it would kill his horse to travel that night. The bishop all the time was sitting on his horse in silence, and on the vote being taken, he reined up his steed, and said, 'Kill man, kill horse; kill horse first;' and in a few minutes we made our arrangements for the night. The night being dark, and having but a narrow path, we appointed two to proceed in front to lead the way and keep the path, and two as a rear guard, to keep some distance behind, and bring intelligence every half hour, that we might know whether the Indians were in pursuit of us, for we could not go faster than a walk. It was reported that they were following us till near twelve o'clock. We were then on the Big Laurel River. We agreed to proceed, alighted from our horses, and continued on foot till daybreak, when we arrived at the Hazel Patch, where we stopped and fed our horses, and took some refreshment. We were mounted and on our journey by the rising of the sun. By this time we were all very much fatigued, and had yet at least between forty and fifty miles before us for that day. That night about dark we arrived at our good friend Willis Green's, near Standford, Lincoln Court house, having been on horseback nearly forty hours, during which we traveled about one hundred and ten miles. I perfectly recollect that at supper I handed my cup for a second cup of tea, and before it reached me I was fast asleep, and had to be waked up to receive it."

We thus get some glimpses of the hard realities of the early itinerancy in the West. With their bishop bravely confronting such exposures and fatigues, the subordinate evangelists could not but be emboldened to defy them. Burke's next appointment was on Danville circuit, which comprised Mercer, Lincoln, Garrow, and Madison counties. Its settlements were mostly around the fortified "stations." It had but three log chapels in all this vast range of country; a fourth was built before the close of the year, and properly named after the heroic circuit preacher. Burke was a courageous man, and as such was chosen to command bands of preachers and laymen who used to advance to meet Asbury and conduct him westward; he led such a band, consisting of sixty persons, in 1794, through terrible difficulties and dangers among the Cumberland Mountains, to meet the bishop on the Holston, when four of the corps, who had advanced one mile, were killed and scalped.

In 1794 we find him on Salt River circuit, famous for its hardships. It was nearly five hundred miles in extent, comprising five counties, to be traveled every four weeks, with continual preaching. The sorely tried itinerant writes: "I was reduced to the last pinch. My clothes were nearly all gone. I had patch upon patch, and patch by patch, and I received only money sufficient to buy a waistcoat, and not enough of that to pay for the making."

By the spring of 1795 this brave man had traveled all the circuits of Kentucky, save a small one, called Limestone, which lay on the north side of Licking River. From the time that the first Methodist missionaries entered the new field up to this spring, there had been one continued Indian war, while the whole frontier

east, west, north, and south, had been exposed to the inroads and depredations of the merciless savages. In this spring was the noted Nickajack expedition, which terminated the Cherokee carnage; Wayne's treaty at Greenville, Ohio, put an end to the Indian wars, and the whole Western country, for once, had peace. Burke remarks that "there is one thing worthy of notice; that notwithstanding the constant exposure of the traveling preachers, but two of them fell by the hands of the savages, and both of them had the name of Tucker." He is mistaken, however; no itinerant preacher fell by the savages during these times. There was but one of the name of Tucker in the regular ministry before the year 1800, and he located in 1798. These two victims were indeed Methodist preachers and martyrs, but they belonged to the local ministry. One of them was the devoted man whose melancholy death we have heretofore noticed.[16] The other perished near a "station" south of Green River, not far from the present Greensburg.

It would not be tedious, but unnecessary, to cite further illustrations of these trying but romantic times, from the record of Burke. We read continually of incredible travels, labors, and sufferings, of journeys of upward of a hundred miles without a single house on the way, and of night campings in the woods, but also of the triumphs of the gospel against the threatening barbarism of the wilderness. At the end of our present period (1796) he recrossed the mountains, being appointed to Guildford Circuit, North Carolina. But the next year he was back again. His fate was now fixed for the West; by the end of the century he had command of most of its Methodist interests; and in the summer of 1800 he "rode down two good horses,"

[16] Vol. ii, p. 358.

had "worn out his clothes," was "ragged and tattered," and had "not a cent in his pocket." He labored twenty-six years in the hardest fields of Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Ohio. As late as 1811 he organized and took charge of the first Methodist station in Cincinnati, the first indeed in Ohio; there his health failed, and he had to retire from the effective work of the ministry. He was universally venerated in the city; "there was no civil office, in the gift of the people, which was not within his reach."[17] He was appointed a judge of the county, and afterward postmaster of the city, and held the latter office under successive administrations for twenty-eight years. A shadow passed over his path; he was suspended by a Conference for alleged contumacy, but one of the best authorities and noblest men of the Church has vindicated his memory, and says: "Previously to this time he had been a great and good Methodist. He had done and suffered as much for the cause as any man in the great West. His controversy with the elder, for which he was accused, was about a very small matter, involving nothing like immorality, and by bad management, on the part of the Conference, more than on Burke's part, it terminated in his expulsion from the Church. I had a perfect knowledge of this entire case from first to last, and rejoice to leave it as my dying testimony that the Conference was more to blame than William Burke. It is true he was restored again to membership after he had lived out of the Church twenty long, gloomy years; but he never was the same man afterward. I pretend not to say Burke was a faultless man: he had faults and many faults; but in his heart he was a man of God. I have loved him long, and love

[17] Rev. Dr. Sehon, in Annals of Southern Methodism, vol. ii, p. 271.

him now that he has passed away to his home in heaven."[18] Thus again we learn, that with all their devotion and heroism these Methodist preachers were but men. It is indeed mournful that this veteran hero should, in his broken age suffer the severest and longest of all his trials in the western field, for which he had suffered and achieved more perhaps than any other man of his day, and suffer now from the hands of his own brethren, most of whom were but the children of his early people, for it was as late as 1818 that the hasty act of the Conference cast the grayheaded man out of the ranks that he had so often led to victory. His vindication, however, by one of the saintliest men of the ministry, scarcely less a veteran than himself, suffices for his memory. But further than this, the General Conference, which sustained the course of his Conference, voted, in 1836, for the restoration of his name to the Minutes. After the division of the Church in 1844 it appears in the Minutes of his old field, the Kentucky Conference. He committed errors, and showed undue resentment of his treatment; but such a man has peculiar claims on the forbearance of his junior brethren. He died in the peace of the gospel, at Cincinnati, in 1855, aged 85.[19] He had been the first secretary of an American Methodist Conference, and was a member of the committee of fourteen who, in the General Conference of 1808, drafted the constitutional law, or "Restrictive Rules" of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

John Kobler appeared in 1792 among the rugged mountains of the Greenbrier, under the presiding eldership of Poythress, whose district comprehended much of Western Virginia, and Kentucky as far as Lexing-

[18] Rev. Jacob Young's Autobiography, etc., p. 313.
[19] Letter of Rev. Dr. A. Poe to the author.

ton. Kobler was born in Culpepper County, Virginia, in 1768, of religious parents, who educated him in habits of strict morality. He joined the Church in his nineteenth year, and in his twenty-first "gave up home, friends, and prospects, and entered the rough field of itinerant life."[20] He appears in the Minutes of 1790 as "continued on trial," and therefore must have traveled the preceding year, though the Minutes do not tell where. His first recorded appointment was on Amelia circuit, Virginia, under O'Kelly's presiding eldership. In 1791 he began to tend westward, traveling Bradford circuit, Virginia, at the eastern slope of the Blue Ridge; the next year he scaled the Alleghanies and traveled the Greenbrier Valley. In 1793 he became presiding elder of the entire denomination in the Holston Mountains, with three circuits and five preachers; and now, in an adequate field, he displayed his full powers as one of the giant men of the itinerancy, by vast travels, continual and powerful preaching, and the endurance of the worst trials of the ministry. The next year he retained command of his mountain corps, enlarged to seven men, with five circuits. We find him there still in 1795, with seven circuits and eleven men, among whom were such befitting associates as Benjamin Lakin, Tobias Gibson, and William M'Kendree. His great district reached to this side the mountains. He retained the laborious office till 1797, when he passed further westward, and presided over the whole field in Kentucky and Tennessee. He continued to traverse these wilds till 1798, when we shall meet him again, in Ohio, the first Methodist itinerant who entered the great Northwestern Territory—"a man," say his brethren, in their Minutes, "of saint-like spirit, dignified and

[20] Finley's Sketches, etc., p. 164.

ministerial bearing, untiring labors in preaching, praying, and visiting the sick;" of "preaching abilities above mediocrity;" tall, slender, with an energy of soul which far surpassed that of his body.

Among the really great men that begin now to rise like a host in Western Methodism is Thomas Scott, known and venerated throughout the West as Judge Scott. He was born at Skypton, near the junction of the north and south branches of the Potomac, Alleghany County, Md., in 1772. In his fourteenth year he became a Methodist, and, when but sixteen and a half years old, was received on trial by the Conference of 1789, and appointed, as colleague of Valentine Cook, on Gloucester Circuit, Va. The next year he traveled Berkeley Circuit, Va.; in 1791 he was with Daniel Hitt, on Stafford Circuit, Va.; the following year he was with Thomas Lyell, on Frederick Circuit, Va., and in 1793 was sent to the Ohio Circuit, a field of "great extent, much of which lay along the frontier settlements on the Ohio River, in Western Virginia and Pennsylvania, and exposed to the attacks of the Indians." His lot was now cast, permanently, in the West. In 1794, at the command of Asbury, he descended the Ohio River from Wheeling, on a flat-boat, to join the band of Kentucky itinerants, and met them in conference at the Bethel Academy, in Jessamine County. He afterward labored on Danville and Lexington Circuits. Marrying in 1796, it became necessary, as usual with his fellow-laborers, to locate. To locate, however, was then, as we have often remarked, not to cease to preach. Scott was to remain an influential preacher when nearly all that generation of Methodist itinerants and people had passed away. Preaching on Sundays, he applied himself to business on week days to support his family. Mean

while, he studied law as best he could with the few facilities for such studies in the West. His wife read his law books for him while he plied his work, and, by the superior force of his mind, he made extraordinary progress. In 1798 he was able to remove to Lexington, and pursue more effectually his legal studies in the office of an able jurist. He afterward moved into Fleming County, where he was appointed "Prosecuting Attorney."

In 1801 he went to Chilicothe, Ohio, where by providential circumstances he became fixed for the remainder of his long and useful life. Years earlier, while traveling Berkeley Circuit, Va., he was invited to visit Charlestown, about four miles out of his usual route, a place where a few Methodists had been for some time molested by mobs. After preaching there, in a grove, he requested all who wished to join the Church to meet him at his lodging at a given hour. He writes that "before the hour had arrived Dr. Edward Tiffin came into the room where I was sitting, and commenced a conversation with me. Being a stranger to me, and not knowing but that he had been one of those who had favored the mobs, I conversed with him cautiously. He, however, remained, and several others soon collected. After singing, prayer, and an exhortation, I gave an invitation to those who wished to become members to come forward and announce their names. The doctor was standing on the opposite side of the room fronting me. I had not perceived that he was affected; but the moment I gave the invitation he quickly stepped forward, evidently under deep and pungent conviction, roaring almost with anguish, and asked for admission into the Church. He was admitted; and before I had completed that round on the circuit he

had preached several sermons. Immediately after I had received Dr. Tiffin into the Church he became convinced of his call to the ministry. Conferring not with flesh and blood, and without waiting for a license, he forthwith commenced preaching. One of the places selected by him for that purpose was Bullskin. There his ministerial labors, as also the labors of Lewis Chastain and Valentine Cook, were greatly blessed. A very large class of lively, excellent members was formed, who met at the house of old Mr. Smith, father of Henry Smith, of Pilgrim's Rest, near Baltimore. The latter, in his 'Recollections,' speaks of Dr. Tiffin's sermons as 'pathetic and powerful.' Although the doctor commenced preaching before receiving license for that purpose, it was evident that he had not run before he was sent. Yet the cross was almost insupportably heavy, and he had at first well nigh sunk under it. He told me himself, more than thirty five years ago, that, attending at one of his appointments—perhaps one of the first that had been made for him—seeing the people flock in, in multitudes, and knowing that mere curiosity to hear him had brought most of them out, his heart failed within him. He slipped out some half an hour before the time appointed for commencing the meeting, and hastily retired to a deep forest near at hand, with the intention of hiding himself till the congregation should become tired of waiting and disperse. But it would not do. He could not flee from the vivid conviction, 'a dispensation of the Gospel is committed to me, and woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel.' In his agony the perspiration fell in large drops from his face, and his garments were wet with its profuse flow. He felt almost involuntarily impelled to return to the house, which was now full to overflowing, with great

numbers outside. Scarcely able to stand, he commenced the service 'in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.' But he soon felt divinely aided, and preached with great liberty, for sinners were cut to the heart, and God honored his servant in the sight of all the people."

Tiffin had a family, and could not, therefore, enter the itinerancy in these hard times, when the marriage of a preacher was synonymous with his location; but he was a man of extraordinary energy and zeal, and henceforth, through his long life, was a representative of his denomination. In two years he was ordained a deacon by Asbury. The bishop admired and loved him heartily, was often entertained at his house, and, it is said, dispensed, in his ordination, with the usual prerequisites of recommendations from three elders, three deacons, etc., and "without solicitation or suggestion of any one, conferred the office upon him impromptu."[21] Scott had no apprehension, as he received the young physician into the Church, that he was providing, not only a great man for the denomination, but a great friend for his own time of need. Now, eleven years later, as he wandered to Chilicothe, he found that Tiffin had also wandered thither from Virginia, and was already a commanding citizen, preaching the gospel in all the surrounding country, organizing Churches, turning his medical practice into a means of religious ministration to the sick and dying, gratuitously dealing out medicines, with his characteristic liberality, to the poor, who came to him from great distances, courageously and successfully performing difficult cases of surgery, and sheltering with profuse liberality Methodist preachers, his "excellent wife receiving

[21] Finley's Sketches, p. 264.

them as messengers from God." "She was," says a veteran itinerant, "one of the most conscientious and heavenly-minded women I ever saw—a mother in our Israel, indeed."[22] She was one of those select "women of Methodism" who ministered to Asbury, and who were honored with his affectionate friendship. Asbury, on visiting Chilicothe in 1808, went to her tomb and made the following record: "Within sight of this beautiful mansion lies the precious dust of Mary Tiffin. It was as much as I could do to forbear weeping as I mused over her speaking grave. How mutely eloquent! Ah, the world knows little of my sorrows; little knows how dear to me are my many friends, and how deeply I feel their loss; but they all die in the Lord, and this shall comfort me. I delivered my soul here. May this dear family feel an answer to Mary Tiffin's prayers." Boehm, who was with the bishop, adds: "On our tour in 1811 we visited Governor Worthington, her brother, and he requested the bishop to write an appropriate inscription for the tombstone of his sister. He took his pen and wrote this: 'And Mary hath chosen that good part that shall not be taken away from her.' These words are upon the tombstone of that excellent woman." Boehm at the same visit thus characterizes the doctor: "Several sermons of great pathos and power were preached on the camp-ground. One of the most remarkable was by Dr. Tiffin, ex-governor of Ohio, from 'What is a man profited,' etc. The doctor threw his whole soul into it as he dwelt upon the soul's immense value and its amazing loss, and the fact that nothing can compensate for such a loss. His appeals to the heart and conscience were almost irresistible. His voice was musical, his gestures

[22] Rev. Henry Smith's "Recollections of an Old Itinerant," p. 327.

were rapid, and his countenance expressed all his tongue uttered. There was a mighty work among the people during this day, and it continued all night." [23]

The doctor became the chief citizen of Ohio; it was still a territory; he was one of its legislators; was elected a member of the convention which formed its state constitution, and soon after had the signal honor to be elected its first state governor "without opposition." He served in this high office a second term, and defeated the conspiracy of Aaron Burr in a manner that called forth the written thanks of President Jefferson, who, in commending the conduct of the citizens of the state, said of its governor, "that in declaring that you have deserved much of your country, I do but express the grateful sentiments of every fellow-citizen in it." Tiffin was afterward chosen Senator in Congress, and held other places of trust. He was an honor to his denomination, and his influence, for it was one of its greatest early advantages in the West. He died, after severe sufferings, in the assured hope of the gospel, in 1829, a man "never excelled," said the public journal of his city, "in the various relations of parent, husband, Christian, and citizen." [24] In stature he was about five feet six inches, full and robust, with a capacious head, a round, florid face, and remarkably expressive features; in conversation vivid, direct, and intelligent; in the pulpit systematic and energetic. "His discourses were delivered with great animation and with eloquence and power. In the country around Chilicothe, where he had so often preached, he was deservedly very popular, his labors in the pulpit were much sought after, and at

[23] Boehm's Reminiscences, p. 198.

[24] The "Scioto Gazette," of Chilicothe, Aug. 12, 1829.

quarterly and camp-meetings he was always assigned one, at least, of the chief appointments on the Sabbath. To his active labors and influence the Church is more indebted than to any other man for the introduction and establishment of Methodism in Chilicothe and the surrounding country." [25]

He sympathized tenderly with the suffering itinerants. To the young preachers especially he gave inspiriting counsels, writing to them with the tenderness of a father, being anxious that they should keep up their energy and heroism. To one of them he wrote: "I feel glad also to hear of your getting so big and strong, hoping thereby you will be better enabled to cry aloud and spare not. But take care, if this be not the consequence, that it don't fill up your silver pipe, and make you like an overgrown drone bee, that always makes a buzzing, and drives no sting. If this should be the case, which God forbid, send me word, and I will endeavor to find you a prescription to remedy it. Watch and pray, and I hope my God will make you a polished shaft in his quiver. Be humble; endeavor to get freed of a man-fearing and man-pleasing spirit. Simply drink into the spirit of the Gospel, preach for God, and pray for poor, dear sinners; and I hope and believe God will give you to see his pleasure prosper in your hands. Blessed be God, my wife and self are bound for glory. We do feel ourselves advancing in the divine life, and God does dwell in our hearts. O how many sweet times I have with the sick, poor sinners, when the hand of God is upon them; then their hearts are tender, and I can bring them on their knees before him. I think, if I know my heart, I only want to live to and for God. But O my weakness, my weakness! What a field is

[25] Samuel Williams, Esq., in Finley's Sketches, p. 286.

before me for doing good if I had but grace enough to redeem every moment of precious time. O brother, pray for poor me, and improve every opportunity of writing to me. Bless God, I am happy while writing to you, and feel as if I only wanted wings and an opening in this clay temple to creep out, that I might fly away to my Saviour's arms. I think they would be open to receive me." [26]

Scott was welcomed to Chilicothe by his old friend and convert. He sent for his family, and settled there. Tiffin gave him employment in a clerkship, and promoted his legal business and studies. He was elected secretary to the convention for the formation of the state constitution. When Tiffin was elected governor, Scott succeeded him in the clerkship of several courts, and at the first township election of Chilicothe, under the constitution, he was elected a justice of the peace, the first one commissioned under the state organization. He was also elected secretary of the first state senate, an office which he held several years, till he was appointed, by the Legislature, a judge of the Supreme Court, whose chief justice he became one year later.

In these prominent civil places he acquitted himself with honor, for his native capacity was much above mediocrity, and his diligent application both to study and labor rendered him master of his position. His official rank secured him public influence, and this he, like his friend Tiffin, consecrated to religion. They were two of the strongest pillars of Methodism in Ohio, and to their public character and labors it owes much of its rapid growth and predominant sway in that magnificent state. Had Scott been able, after his marriage, to remain in the itinerant ministry, he would probably

[26] Letter to Daniel Hitt, So. Meth. Quart. Rev., Apr., 1859, p. 294.

have attained, as his friends predicted, its highest office and dignity; but it may be doubted whether he or Tiffin could, even as its chief bishop, have served their denomination, or their generation, more effectively than they did in their long and honorable lives as local preachers and public citizens. Ohio reveres the memory of her Methodist first governor and first chief justice, and has given the name of the former to two of her towns.

In following Scott northward, in order to complete, at one view, the outline of his career, we have anticipated, somewhat, important events of our narrative, for we leave him and Tiffin representatives of Methodism in Ohio before we have witnessed its introduction into the great "Northwestern Territory." The anticipation, however, is but brief; we have already seen Kobler, its first regular itinerant, tending toward that region; and before the close of our present period, its recognized founder in Ohio, a local preacher, had reached it.[27] In the account of Henry Smith, a convert of Judge Scott, in Virginia, and himself a western pioneer, we have met, in Western Virginia, an obscure but most interesting character by the name of Francis M'Cormick. M'Cormick, "a powerful man" with the fist and the ax, was a young fellow-convert, and a fellow-exhorter, with Smith. We have seen both essaying their first ability as "exhorters" in "Davenport's Meeting-house," at the "head of Bullskin," a place where Tiffin also had often preached. Smith broke down in the attempt, though "one poor sinner cried out for mercy" under his open-

[27] We have some dim evidence that Francis Clark (who is said to have formed the first Methodist Society in Kentucky) preached as early as 1793 in Fort Washington, now Cincinnati. "He visited and preached at Fort Washington, where Cincinnati now stands, as early as 1793, two years before General Wayne's treaty with the Indians. For this

ing prayer. M'Cormick rose for his rescue, and conducted the service with such "liberty" and effect that "the soul-melting power of the Lord came down, and was felt through all the house." [28]

The name of Francis M'Cormick was destined to become dear in the hearts, and great in the history, of his people as the founder of Methodism in the most important section of the North American continent, the Northwestern Territory. A Methodist bishop, meditating at the grave of the pioneer, has recorded some of the most important facts of his life.[29] He was born in Frederick County, Va , June 3, 1764. His parents were good Presbyterians, but his father became a distiller, ceased to pray in his family, and not only fell away from, but opposed religion. His son grew up "a wild and wicked" youth. He heard William Jessop preach, a man of powerful eloquence.[30] As he saw the people weeping and praying under the discourse, "his heart was filled with madness," and he turned away with the deter-

historic fact we have the testimony of Samuel Brown, who was a member of the first Methodist Society formed, and in good repute among them. He affirmed that he was in the fort at the time of Clark's visit, and that he was welcomed and respected as a messenger from God, regarded as exemplary in his conduct, and possessed of good gifts, as well as grace, and the people heard him gladly. He seems to have been a kind of invited missionary, who as he could obtain escorts, visited the various stations, block-houses, and military posts on the frontiers, where the people had to be concentrated for mutual protection. We have evidence for believing this was the same 'Francis Clark,' a local preacher, who was the honored pioneer of Methodism in Kentucky. He and John Durham, a class-leader, and a few of their neighbors, with their families, removed from Virginia about 1784; and Clark organized the first Methodist class ever formed in what was then called 'the far West,' about six miles from where Danville now stands."—Rev. J. F. Wright, in West. Chris. Adv., March 7, 1866.

[28] Smith's "Recollections," etc., p. 246.

[29] Bishop Clark, in "Ladies' Repository," March, 1860.

[30] See vol. ii, p. 148.

mination to witness such scenes no more. He forbade his young wife to attend them, yet she could not but perceive that, in spite of his resolution, his conscience was thoroughly awakened. We have already seen how the conversion of his young friend Smith, about this time, affected him. He returned with his wife to the Methodist meetings; and after a sermon he remained to witness a love-feast, of which he later wrote: "The simplicity, love, and union that prevailed I was quite charmed with. Surely, thought I, these are the people of God. Yet for all this, when the invitation was given for people to join society, my wife being one of the first to join, I was so angry that I went off home and left her. I was so filled with the wicked one that I scarcely knew what to think of myself, for I then as much believed she was doing right as I should now if any other person was becoming a member." He could not, however, silence his awakened conscience. He became the more interested in the Methodists when he learned that they "prohibited drunkenness and tippling," for his life in the house of his father had convinced him of their ruinous consequences. He describes himself as "miserable beyond expression," when he went to hear Lewis Chasteen, another itinerant of eminent usefulness. "The preacher," he writes, "was at prayer when we arrived. When he took his text, 'And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the tree; therefore every tree,' etc., it appeared to me that all the wickedness that I had ever committed stared me in my face. A trembling seized me as though all my flesh would drop from my bones. He preached like a son of thunder, as he truly was. After public service he gave an invitation to such as desired to become members to join. There were none but members present, except myself and a young man

by the name of Murphy, who had for some time been under awakenings; but he declined, like Felix, for a more convenient season. Living in the midst of about a hundred relatives, all enemies to the Methodists, how is it possible that I can stand to be opposed by such a multitude! It staggered me in a wonderful manner; but it appeared as though I heard a voice from heaven, 'My Spirit shall not always strive with man.' This had such a powerful effect on my mind that I was resolved to make the trial, let the consequences be what they might. Christmas that year (1790) came on Sunday, and I joined on the Tuesday preceding. The Saturday following, my father, who lived with one of my brothers, sent for me to come and see him. There were a number collected of brothers, and their relatives by marriage, to keep Christmas in their and my old way, and I have always thought that their aim was to get me intoxicated. Be that as it may, they missed it. They were very kind indeed, more so than common, and said nothing to me about religion till I refused to drink with them; then my father said, 'How came you to join the Methodists without my leave?' I told him that I did not know it was my duty to obtain his consent; and added, in the language of Scripture, 'Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.' He replied, 'What have you done that you need repentance? Have you killed anybody? You must leave the Methodists, and I will give you the farm to live on, and treat you as a son.' I replied that I thanked him for all the pains and trouble he had been at in bringing me up, but to leave the Methodists was out of the question, for I would not leave them for all the land in the world. He then flew into a great rage, and told me to begone, or he would burn the house over my head. A number

of those present laughed and made sport of me, and my poor wicked heart resented it for a moment, till I thought, 'just such a one was I a few days ago.' But upon the whole I thought I could have passed through the fire rather than draw back to perdition, and I can truly say that none of these things moved me. The next day, Sunday, I went to meeting. Chasteen preached again from 'There was a little city, and few men within it,' etc. In the discussion of the subject I saw the dreadful situation our world is in through sin, and the wisdom of the poor wise man in seeking redemption from death and destruction. It was then that my load of guilty woe was removed; and how did I feel? All peace and joy. But I had not the witness of the Spirit for some days. Finally, I began to reflect on the trouble I had just been in to mourn because I could not grieve for my sins. At last I discovered by faith that they were all forgiven. Then the Spirit bore witness with my spirit that I was a child of God; the peace and joy that followed no language could express. I wondered at my own stupidity, and that of all the rest of Adam's race, that they could have anything against religion; and I could truly say with David, 'I was glad when they said, Come let us go up to the house of the Lord.' I have thought a thousand times of the lengths of sin I ran into before I was twenty-six years of age such as drinking, Sabbath-breaking, etc., and no one admonished me; but so soon as I began to go to meeting, losing time, as they called it, the cry was, 'You will be ruined!' 'Take care that you are not deceived!' 'The Methodists will all come to nothing!' and what is still more astonishing it is the cry of some people down to the present day."

His fidelity had its reward. His fallen father sent for him to pray by his death-bed, and the faithful son "had access to the mercy-seat," and ever after consoled himself with the hope that his parent was at last reclaimed and saved. Valentine Cook crossed his path, and appointed him class-leader. He began to exhort, and at last to preach. Being married, he could not hope to enter the itinerancy; but he now devoted himself to evangelical labors, manual work being but the means of his support, while the promotion of religion was the task of his life. Like the martyr Tucker, and other local preachers of that day, he emigrated, in 1795, to Kentucky, more to preach the gospel than to get gain. He settled in Bourbon County, but was soon dissatisfied with his position. Though of little cultivation, he was a man of the clearest common sense, and, above all, of that practical moral sense which, for the affairs of this world, as well as of the next, is the highest prudence, the best philosophy of life. Being a native of a slaveholding state, he had seen, with most of the Methodists of his day, that slavery was not only a profound moral wrong, but an incubus on domestic and industrial life. It was extending around him in Kentucky, and he resolved to escape from it, with his young family, into the Northwestern Territory. He crossed the Ohio, and built his log-cabin at Milford, in Clermont County. Seven years afterward he removed to what is now known as Salem, but for many years was called "M'Cormick's Settlement," about ten miles from the site of Cincinnati. "It was then little better than a wilderness; now it is one of those rural spots where the eye is feasted with beauty, and the ear with melody, making one dream of Arcadian loveliness. In its quiet graveyard his ashes now slumber."

At Milford he found the settlers thoroughly demoralized, for lack of the means of religion, and forthwith began his good work, inviting them to assemble to hear the word, which he proclaimed to them "as the voice of one crying in the wilderness." He formed a class there, the first Methodist society organized in the Northwestern Territory. He went out preaching among the settlements, and soon established two other classes, one near the present town of Lockland, the other near Columbia. He made urgent appeals to the Kentucky itinerants, informing them of the new and open door of the great Northwest, and calling for immediate help. John Kobler, as we shall hereafter see, soon responded, and became the first regular Methodist preacher north and west of the Ohio River. We shall have occasion, before long, to follow him, and, thenceforward, will rise before us the gigantic Methodism of the great northern states of the Mississippi Valley.

M'Cormick was a man worthy of his peculiar distinction as the Methodistic founder of Ohio. Born and trained in the wilds of the Virginia mountains, he could "endure hardness as a good soldier of the Lord Jesus," amid the privations of the West. He had a remarkably sound judgment, a quick but steady view of what was befitting or expedient; was a "wise and judicious man," and exceedingly candid, accessible and conciliatory in his manners. He was calmly but invincibly courageous, and in his youth served two campaigns in the war of the Revolution, assisting in the siege of Yorktown, and witnessing the surrender of Cornwallis. Without remarkable talents as a preacher, his good sense, his earnestness, unction, and self-denying devotion, made him powerful. Withal, he had an imposing presence. He was robust and tall, full six

feet in height, and weighed two hundred and forty pounds. "His gigantic body was surmounted by a well-developed head and a florid face, expressive of good temper, intelligence, and benevolence. He was the center and charm of the social company which his position and character drew around him. He possessed the largest liberality: house, table, money, time, and influence were freely devoted to God and his Church. His home was for many years a preaching-place, and not unfrequently the people would come forty miles or more to hear the word of life. All such found cordial welcome, not only to a free gospel, but to a free entertainment. He lived not for himself, but for the Church and the cause of God." A giant, a pioneer, a soldier, a Methodist preacher, he was the fitting man for his great historic mission.

Henry Smith, our own venerated contemporary, of "Pilgrim's Rest," was now also itinerating in the West, having gone, as we have seen, to Clarksburgh Circuit, on the Monongahela, Va., in 1794. He shared there the trials and the triumphs common to his ultramontane fellow-laborers. At his first appointment, about fifteen miles beyond Clarksburgh, he gives us a picture of the western congregations of the times. He found there "a good Methodist society," under the care of the devoted Joseph Chieuvrant, "a respectable local preacher."[31] The congregation came from miles around. "They were," says he, "all backwoods people, and came to meeting in backwoods style, a considerable congregation. I looked round and saw one old man who had shoes on his feet. The preacher wore Indian moccasins; every man, woman, and child besides was barefooted. The old women had on what we then

[31] See vol. ii, p. 344.

called short-gowns, and the rest had neither short nor long gowns. This was a novel sight to see for a Sunday congregation. Chieuvrant, in his mocasins, could have preached all round *me;* but I was a stranger, and, withal, the circuit preacher, and must preach, of course. I did my best, and soon found if there were no shoes and fine dresses in the congregation, there were attentive hearers and feeling hearts; for the melting power of the Lord came down upon us, and we felt that the great Head of the Church was in the midst of us. In meeting the class I heard the same humble, loving, religious experience that I had often heard in better-dressed societies. If this scene did not make a backwoodsman of me outright, it at least reconciled me to the people, and I felt happy among them."

They were still exposed here to the Indians, and Chieuvrant not only preached in moccasins, but shouldered his gun and followed the trail in pursuit of the murderous savages. In some places Smith saw the men "coming to meeting with their rifles on their shoulders, guarding their families, then setting their guns in a corner of the house till after meeting, and returning in the same order. "O what a poor chance," he exclaims, "these people had to be religious! and yet I found some very pious souls among them. They could give as clear and scriptural an account of conviction for sin and conversion as any people. In conversation with some of these Christian hunters, I was told that when they were under conviction they could take no game. The game was always on the flight before they saw or heard it. The mind was absent, and the eye and the ear would not answer the purpose. We had but one half-finished log meeting house in the whole circuit. We labored hard, and suffered not a little, and did not

get the half of our sixty-four dollars for support. We traveled through all weathers and dangers, over bad roads and slippery hills, and waded deep waters, having the Monongahela to cross seven times every round, and few ferries. Our fare was plain enough. Some times we had venison and bear-meat in abundance. Our lodgings were often uncomfortable. Most of my clothes became threadbare, and some worn out, and I had no money to buy new ones. I had to put up one night with a strange family, where I was obliged to keep on my overcoat to hide the rents in my clothes."

Methodist laymen were made the braver by their religion to defend the settlements from the savages. Some of them were noted Indian fighters. There remains a letter from the famous Major J. M'Colloch to the western itinerant, Daniel Hitt, dated "Ohio," 1794, which shows the spirit of the times on this frontier. He writes: "I am just going to love-feast at Brother Meek's, hoping to meet the Lord, and get my spiritual strength renewed. I thank God for his goodness to me day by day in giving me a heart to serve him. I know and feel my unworthiness, but thank God that I am what I am; and through his grace I hope to meet him in glory. I am still commanding the Rangers, and, before this reaches you, it may be my lot to fall by the hand of a savage enemy; but the Lord's will be done. I thank you for your visit to my house, and hope, if you should come near us, you will always call upon us. I saw your brother at quarterly meeting, but I had not the pleasure of speaking to him. I hope that the bishop will send him to this circuit. Please to write to me by the preachers that come; and may the God of glory make you and me more zealous to do his will, and grant us grace so to live that we may be worthy to praise

him in endless glory. Pray for me, your unworthy brother, that I may be able to stand, and not turn my back to run from my enemies, neither spiritual nor temporal, and that the Lord may enable me to walk humbly before him every day of my life. I remain your unworthy brother in Christ."[32] Henry Boehm, traveling with Asbury through the Redstone country in 1808, wrote: "We were entertained at Major Samuel M'Colloch's. He and his brother John were celebrated in the annals of Indian warfare. He it was who, when pursued by the Indians, made that terrible leap of three hundred feet down a precipice with his horse into the river, and thus mercifully escaped out of their murderous hands. The leap of General Putnam at Horseneck was nothing compared with this. He was an excellent member of the Methodist Church, and his house was one of the choice homes where the bishop and other preachers were made welcome."

In his old age and retirement the genial veteran, Henry Smith, related with entertaining zest the adventures of his youth in these wilds: "I have often rode," he said "fifteen or twenty miles through the woods where no one lived, the people having fled from danger; and I rode alone, for I never had any guard but the angels. The tales of woe that were told me in almost every place where there was danger; the places pointed out where murder had been committed; sleeping in houses where the people who were inured to these things were afraid to go out of doors after sunset; I say, riding alone, under these circumstances, was far from being agreeable. I was often in danger in crossing rivers and swimming creeks. I found the people remarkably kind and sociable. Many pleasant

[32] So. Meth. Quar. Rev., Oct., 1859, p. 620.

hours we spent together by the side of our large log-fires in the log-cabins conversing on various subjects; but religion was generally our delightful theme. Our hearts were sometimes made to burn within us while we talked of Jesus and his love. It is true, some of us smoked the pipe with them, but we really thought there was no harm in that, for we had no anti-tobacco societies among us then; and yet some of us rose at four o'clock in the morning to pray and read our Bibles. If we could get a lamp or candle we preferred it; if not, we read by fire-light. Many times I have begged to have a pallet before the fire, that I might not oversleep myself. We were also regular in our hours of retirement for prayer. When we had a closet for the purpose we went to it; if not, we went to the woods, in summer; but when there was danger, always at an early hour. In winter, or when it rained, we sought a place in a fodder-house, or somewhere else where we could be secreted. More than once I have been startled by dogs bouncing out when I entered into the fodder-house, or coming upon me at my devotions, and assailing me as an intruder. If I did not enjoy the privilege of private prayer, particularly in the evening, I felt uncomfortable in mind. And we were not satisfied with having said our prayers; our doctrine was, Pray till you get your soul made happy. As to preaching to a congregation without having previously been upon our knees, and asked divine assistance and God's blessing upon the word, (when opportunity offered,) we would have been afraid of being confounded before them. We had few books. I had Wesley's Notes and Fletcher's Appeal, and, I believe, Wesley's Sermons, but no commentary on the Bible. The first time I saw Brown's Dictionary of the Bible I would have purchased it at any price if I had been able to procure it."

In 1795 he was sent to the famous Redstone Circuit. At the Baltimore Conference of 1796, "Asbury," he says, "called for volunteers to go to Kentucky, and fixed his eye upon me as one. I said, 'Here am I, send me.' I was ordained in a private room, before Conference opened; and in a few hours after my ordination John Watson and myself were on horseback, on our way to Kentucky, almost before any one knew we were going. We pushed across the Alleghany Mountain to Youghiongheny River, in hopes of getting into a family boat down the Ohio, for then there was no road through the wilderness. We had two families and eleven horses (ours made thirteen) in the boat. Two or three of our family had the measles on board. We were much crowded; but after floating, and sometimes rowing, night and day, through rain, wind, and smoke, for nine days and nights, we landed safely at Brooke's Landing, Mason County, Kentucky, December 1796. We were very uncomfortably situated, but we were going on the Lord's business, and our minds were stayed on him and kept in peace. We had family prayer when circumstances would admit of it. The wind blew from every point, and it was cold, and we were obliged to have fire in a large kettle. The smoke annoyed us very much, but we were mercifully preserved. How much better we were off than poor Tucker and Carter, two Methodist preachers, who were killed by the Indians in going down the river!" He hastened into the interior and found Poythress, who sent him to Salt River Circuit. For some years he was a successful pioneer of the Church, "traveling round every circuit in Kentucky and visiting every society," sharing fully the trials and triumphs of the mighty men who were then abroad there, Poythress, M'Henry,

Burke, Kobler, and their compeers. "Methodism," he remarks, "had spread, when I went out, nearly over the state, though opposed everywhere, and by nearly every sort of people." He passed also into the northwestern territory, and became a co-laborer of Kobler and M'Cormick.

In the great trans-Alleghany field we meet again Valentine Cook, that "wonderful man" of whom marvelous traditions are rife in the Church, from the interior lakes of New York, through the Wyoming and Tioga Mountains, and Redstone and Holston countries, down to the remotest regions of Kentucky and Tennessee. He was on the Pittsburgh and Clarksburgh Circuits, and the Pittsburgh District, during these years, and afterward pushed into Kentucky, where he spent the remainder of his life. He was considered the most learned man of the Methodist ministry of his day. His early education, at Cokesbury, and his devotion to biblical studies and the classic languages, together with a peculiar, original capacity of mind, very much like genius, gave him an intellectual vigor which, combined with extraordinary moral force and unction, rendered him a sort of prodigy among his brethren.[33]

Asbury, as has been intimated, was kept, for some time, from the West by his infirm health; but in April, 1795, he again ventured over the mountains into, at least, the verge of Tennessee. As he entered the heights, in Wilkes County, N. C., he was depressed at the semi-barbarous condition of the people. "O Lord!" he exclaims, "help me to go through good and evil report, prosperity and adversity, storms and calms, kindness and unkindness,

[33] A pamphlet containing a report, by himself, of one of his famous western public debates on Baptism, shows rare excellencies of style, research, and logic.

friends and enemies, life and death, in the spirit and practice of the gospel of Jesus Christ! We came in the evening to the house of a poor, honest man. Bless God! we can enter the poor cabins and find shelter. The people are kind and free with what they have. My soul enjoys sweet peace; but I see an awful danger of losing that simple walking and living in the enjoyment of God. I observed a day of rigid fasting; this I cannot do more than once a month. I am frequently obliged to go on three cups of tea, with a little bread, for eight or nine hours, and to ride many miles, and preach, and perform my other ministerial labors. I stood the fatigue, and sleeping three in a bed, better than I expected. We hasted to Earnest's, on Nolachucky River, where we held our Western Conference. Here six brethren from Kentucky met us, and we opened the Conference with twenty-three preachers, fifteen of whom were members. We received every man's account of himself and his late labors; and inquired of each man's character among his brethren. Our business was conducted with great love and harmony. Our brethren have built a meeting-house, and I must needs preach the first sermon, which I did on Exod. xx, 24. Notwithstanding it was a time of great scarcity, we were most kindly entertained." We have already been at this place and learned the story of "Father Earnest's" singular conversion. The good local preacher now rejoiced in the honor of having nearly all the itinerant heroes of the West around him in his own chapel. "On the 1st of May," continues the bishop, "we rode thirty miles to Holstein, without food for man or horse. In addition to the heat of the weather and fatigue I have gone through, I have not slept five hours a night, one night with another, for five nights past." On reaching Fincastle he says: "The toils of this

journey have been great, the weather sultry, the rides long, and roads rough. We suffered from irregularity in food and lodging; although the people are very kind, and give us the best they have, and that without fee or reward, so that I have only spent about two shillings in riding about two hundred miles. I hope posterity will be bettered by my feeble efforts. I have ridden two hundred and twenty miles in seven days and a half, and am so exceedingly outdone and oppressed with pain, weariness, and want of sleep, that I have hardly courage to do anything. Hail, happy day of rest! It draws nigh, and this labor and toil will soon be at an end!"

He hastened eastward, but in about one year (April, 1796) he again set his face toward the wilderness, writing, as he ascended the mountains, "Ah, what a round of continual running is my life! Of late, feeble as I am, I cannot help thinking of Cumberland, in Tennessee, and trying to go there. If I must go to Kentucky, I think it is time to go to Cumberland also. I ascended about one mile up a mountain, and came to Davenport's. Here I felt deep dejection of mind as well as great weakness of body, and as if I could lie down and die; owing in some measure, I presume, to the great fatigue I underwent in ascending the mountain, which was very steep. Saturday, 16, we set off at six o'clock, and directed our course up Tow River; thence up the Rocky Creek through the gap of the Yellow Mountain, to the head waters of Tow River. We had to ride till eight o'clock at night. My mind is still under deep depression."

Passing on through the gap of the Yellow Mountain, he was again in Tennessee, "at Dawe's," where he preached to two hundred settlers, "met the society,

and had a melting season," and on Tuesday, April 19, writes: "The preachers came in from Kentucky and Cumberland. Wednesday, 20, our Conference began in great peace, and thus it ended. We had only one preacher for each circuit in Kentucky, and one for Green Circuit in Tennessee. Myself being weak, and my horse still weaker, I judged it impracticable to attempt going through the wilderness to Kentucky, and have concluded to visit Nolachucky. I wrote an apology to the brethren in Kentucky for my not coming, and informed them of the cause. Monday, 25, on the banks of Nolachucky I parted with our dear suffering brethren, going through the howling wilderness. I feel happy in God. The preachers, although young men, appear to be solemn and devoted to God, and doubtless are men who may be depended upon. Sunday, May 1, we came to Acuff's Chapel. I found the family sorrowful and weeping, on account of the death of Francis Acuff, who from a fiddler became a Christian; from a Christian, a preacher; and from a preacher, I trust, a glorified saint. He died in the work of the Lord in Kentucky. I found myself assisted in preaching on Ephes. ii, 1, 2. The house was crowded, and I trust they did not come together in vain. I was somewhat alarmed at the sudden death of Reuben Ellis, who hath been in the ministry upward of twenty years; a faithful man of God, of slow, but very solid parts: he was an excellent counselor, and steady yoke-fellow in Jesus. My mind is variously exercised as to future events—whether it is my duty to continue to bear the burden I now bear, or whether I had better retire to some other land. I am not without fears that a door will be opened to honor, ease, or interest, and then farewell to religion in the American Methodist Connection; but death

may soon end all these thoughts, and quiet all these fears."

He was, in fact, seriously thinking of the resignation of his episcopal office, and he tendered it at a subsequent General Conference. He was worn out, but was to continue to battle with his infirmities, and travel on yet for a score of years, dropping at last from the pulpit into the grave; the only death befitting such a life.

"I hobbled on," he continues, "over the ridge through Russell County," where he greeted John Kobler. Hastening through Wythe County, "we rode," he says, "forty miles to Indian Creek, about fifteen miles above the mouth. We had no place to dine until we arrived at Father C.'s, about six o'clock. If I could have regular food and sleep I could stand the fatigue I have to go through much better; but this is impossible under some circumstances. To sleep four hours, and ride forty miles without food or fire, is hard; but we had water enough in the rivers and creeks. I shall have ridden nearly one thousand miles on the western waters before I leave them. I have been on the waters of Nolachucky to the mouth of Clinch; on the north, middle, and south branches of Holston; on New River, Green Brier, and by the head springs of Monongahela. If I were able I should go from Charleston, S. C., a direct course, five hundred miles, to Nolachucky; thence two hundred and fifty miles to Cumberland; thence one hundred to Kentucky; thence one hundred miles through that state, and two hundred to Saltsburgh; thence two hundred to Green Brier; thence two hundred to Red Stone, and three hundred to Baltimore. Ah, if I were young again! I was happy to have a comfortable night's sleep after a hard day's ride, and but little rest the night before. I have now a little

time to refit, recollect, and write. Here forts and savages once had a being, but now peace and improvement."

Thus meager as are these bald outlines (all that remain of him) the great man nevertheless looms up before us amid these mountains, a giant, with moral proportions correspondent with the physical grandeur around him.

He held a small Conference at Rehoboth, in the Green Brier heights, and thence he pushed on to meet the pioneers of the Redstone country, in Western Pennsylvania, encountering appalling difficulties through the mountains. "Frequently," he writes, "we were in danger of being plucked off our horses by the boughs of the trees under which we had to ride. About seven o'clock, after crossing six mountains, and many rocky creeks and fords of Elk and Monongahela Rivers, we made the Valley of Distress, called by the natives Tyger's Valley. Thence we hastened on at the rate of forty-two miles a day. We had to ride four miles in the night, and went supperless to the Punchins, where we slept a little on hard lines. After encountering many difficulties, known only to God and ourselves, we came to Morgantown." After a Conference at Uniontown he returned to the East, but not to rest, as we have seen in following him to the North, to New England, to the farthest South.

Besides the itinerants heretofore mentioned, many yet young, but destined to become historical characters, had already entered, or were about to enter the great West, such as Daniel Hitt, John Lindsey, Tobias Gibson, Benjamin Lakin, William Beauchamp. William M'Kendree had been tending thither for some years, traveling a Virginia district which stretched beyond the Blue Ridge into the Green Brier Country; he was

soon to enter Kentucky as the chieftain of Western Methodism, and to inaugurate a new era in its history. Robert R. Roberts was preparing for his episcopal career, in the woods, on the banks of the Little Chenango. James Quinn (who first led Roberts into public labors) was about to start on his first circuit. John Sale was being trained on the hardest circuit of Virginia, and was soon to make his way over the mountains. Thornton Fleming, whom we have met in the far North, was rapidly rising to that commanding influence which he long wielded in the old Pittsburgh Conference. John Collins, still in New Jersey, was seeking to save his soul, and leading his brother-in-law, the memorable Larner Blackman, into a holy life, both to become founders of the Church in the Northwest. James B. Finley, yet a youth, but a "mighty hunter," was pondering, in the Western woods, reports of the marvels of Methodism. Peter Cartwright, "naturally a wild, wicked boy, delighting in horse-racing, card-playing, and dancing," was studying, in the Kentucky wilderness, under Beverly Allen, and wondering at the strange news that reached him occasionally from the Methodist "Ebenezer" Church, a few miles to the south. Philip Gatch, whom we have so often met as one of the first two American itinerants, was preparing to leave his retreat in Virginia, and plunge into the wilds of Ohio, where he was to do good service for the Church. Methodism was, in short, putting on strength all through the settled regions of the West. It had now spread entirely over Kentucky and Tennessee; there was hardly a "block-house station" or "settlement" where the itinerants did not, at longer or shorter intervals, sound their trumpets, and it had commenced that march, that triumphant march, into the North

western Territory, in which it has continuously gone on from conquering to conquer. Log chapels were rising through the wilderness; there was probably not yet a single church of higher pretensions; cabins, barns, and the sheltering woods were the most common sanctuaries. By the end of this period, the autumn of 1796, there were west of the mountains four districts, twenty-three circuits, thirty-six traveling preachers, and six thousand five hundred Church members.[35] The few Methodists of Ohio were yet unreported. Tennessee had about 550, Kentucky about 1,750; the remainder were in Western Pennsylvania and Virginia. The West had already much more than double the number reported from New England.

[35] I am not absolutely certain of these figures. In the Minutes of 1796 some four western circuits are repeated, and assigned to two presiding elders.

CHAPTER X.

GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1796.

The Third General Conference — Coke's Return — Pierre de Pontavice, his Traveling Companion — The Proceedings of the Conference — Definitive Annual Conferences — Chapel Deed — Censorship of the Press — The Methodist Magazine — The Chartered Fund — Local Preachers — Spirituous Liquors — Slavery — Rules for Methodist Seminaries — Marriage with Unbelievers — Address to the British Conference — Asbury and Coke on the Session.

THE third General Conference[1] was appointed to meet in Baltimore on the 20th of October, 1796. No difficult business, however, was pending, and it need not long delay the chronological course of our narrative. Coke had been in the West Indies, England, Ireland, and Holland, promoting his missions, writing his commentary, and preaching continually. In the latter part of August he embarked for America, accompanied by Pierre de Pontavice, a nobleman of a distinguished house in Brittany, who had been converted from popery through the instrumentality of Methodism, and had become a useful preacher, and a founder of the denomination in France.[2] The bishop brought him out for his Christian companionship, and to acquire, from his conversation, a better use of the French language, for he hoped yet to proclaim the gospel among the French. Though he could not preach in English, Pontavice was useful in the social circles of the

[1] Properly called the third, though usually the second, as the first, or Christmas session, was in fact a General Conference.

[2] See a sketch of Pontavice in "The History of the Religious Movement of the Eighteenth Century, called Methodism," etc., ii, 336.

American Church. The contemporary records allude to him occasionally with interest.

They arrived in the Chesapeake Bay on the third of October, but were detained there five days by unfavorable winds. On the 18th they reached Baltimore, two days before the Conference opened.[3] Asbury was enjoying the hospitality of Gough, at Perry Hall, but joined his colleague in the city on the 19th, where, he says, about a hundred preachers were in attendance; according to Lee, twenty more arrived later. An address from the British Conference was presented, declaring "that whatever differences may mark other denominations, we are eminently one body," and congratulating the American Church on its "amazing success." The most important business done at this session was the definitive arrangement of the whole Church in six yearly Conferences, to be no longer called "District," but Annual Conferences, namely, the New England, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Virginia, South Carolina, and Western Conferences;[4] the limitation of the attendance of preachers at the sessions to those who were in "full connection, and those who were to be received into full connection," "that the congregations might be supplied with preaching" during the sessions by those yet on trial; the adoption of a form of deed for the security of Church real estate, vesting its ownership in the societies, to be held for them by their trustees, but guaranteeing the use of the pulpits to the authorized ministry; the adoption of the rule that a deacon should serve two years

[3] Coke's Journals in the Methodist Magazine; London, 1798. The volume of Coke's Journals heretofore cited does not include this voyage, but ends in 1793.

[4] The bishop was allowed to hold a Conference in Maine if he should find it expedient.

before his ordination as an elder, except in missions, the authorization of the Philadelphia Conference to determine, by a two thirds vote, with the concurrence of a bishop, what books should or should not be published by the Book Concern, which was still located in Philadelphia; the authorization of the publication of a monthly periodical, to be called "The Methodist Magazine," the Conference declaring that "the propagation of religious knowledge by means of the press is next in importance to the preaching of the gospel;" the establishment of the "Chartered Fund" for the relief of "distressed traveling preachers, the families of traveling preachers, superannuated and worn out preachers, and the widows and orphans of preachers," an institution which still exists; the enactment of the rule that no local preacher shall receive license to preach till he has been examined and recommended by a quarterly Conference, having been first recommended by the society of which he is a member, and that he shall be eligible to ordination as a deacon four years after the date of his license; also of a rule allowing accused local preachers (who had hitherto been tried as private members) trial by local preachers, or, for want of them, by leaders or exhorters, with the right of appeal to the Annual Conferences. It was also enacted that "if any member of our society retail or give spirituous liquors, and anything disorderly be transacted under his roof on this account, the preacher who has the oversight of the circuit shall proceed against him, as in the case of other immoralities, and the person accused shall be cleared, censured, suspended, or excluded, according to his conduct, as on other charges of immorality."

Though defeated in their original provisions against slavery, the zeal of the ministry, on that question, was

still unabated, and the Conference asked the question "What regulations shall be made for the extirpation of the crying evil of African slavery?" And answered, "1. We declare that we are more than ever convinced of the great evil of the African slavery which still exists in these United States, and do most earnestly recommend to the yearly Conferences, quarterly meetings, and to those who have the oversight of districts and circuits, to be exceedingly cautious what persons they admit to official stations in our Church; and, in the case of future admission to official stations, to require such security of those who hold slaves, for the emancipation of them, immediately or gradually, as the laws of the states respectively and the circumstances of the case will admit. And we do fully authorize all the yearly Conferences to make whatever regulations they judge proper, in the present case, respecting the admission of persons to official stations in our Church.

"2. No slaveholder shall be received into society till the preacher who has the oversight of the circuit has spoken to him freely and faithfully on the subject of slavery.

"3. Every member of the society who sells a slave shall immediately, after full proof, be excluded the society. And if any member of our society purchase a slave, the ensuing quarterly meeting shall determine on the number of years in which the slave so purchased would work out the price of his purchase. And the person so purchasing shall, immediately after such determination, execute a legal instrument for the manumission of such slave at the expiration of the term determined by the quarterly meeting. And in default of his executing such instrument of manumission, or on his refusal to submit his case to the judg-

ment of the quarterly meeting, such member shall be excluded the society. Provided, also, that in the case of a female slave, it shall be inserted in the aforesaid instrument of manumission, that all her children which shall be born during the years of her servitude shall be free at the following times, namely, every female child at the age of twenty-one, and every male child at the age of twenty-five. Nevertheless if the member of our society, executing the said instrument of manumission, judge it proper, he may fix the times of manumission of the children of the female slaves before mentioned at an earlier age than that which is prescribed above.

"4. The preachers and other members of our society are requested to consider the subject of negro slavery with deep attention till the ensuing General Conference, and that they impart to the General Conference, through the medium of the yearly Conferences, or otherwise, any important thoughts upon the subject, that the Conference may have full light, in order to take further steps toward the eradicating this enormous evil from that part of the Church of God to which they are united."

The largest space devoted to any one subject in the journal of this session, is that given to education, prescribing minute, though they are entitled "General Rules for the Methodist Seminaries of Learning." Already substantially given in the account of Cokesbury College, they were, nevertheless, adopted and promulgated after the destruction of that establishment, a proof that the Church still persisted in its educational plans. They were ordered to be inserted in the Annual Minutes. As a system they present striking excellences, though marred by some equally striking errors, one of these being the "prohibition of play in the strongest terms;" manual labor and walking being the only per-

mitted recreations; they require also that students shall rise at five o'clock in the morning in winter as well as summer, and without regard to age. Marriage of members with irreligious persons was prohibited, and "even in doubtful cases" the offenders were to "be put back upon trial." An Address to the British Conference was adopted, declaring that "though a vast ocean divides us, we are intimately one with you in spirit, and frequently with much delight remember you in our prayers. We rejoice in your union, and can bless God that we were never more united than at present. A few, indeed, who were as great enemies to the civil government under which they lived as to our discipline, have left us, and we have now not a jarring string among us. God has abundantly owned our feeble labors during this present Conference to the people of Baltimore, and we trust it is an earnest of a glorious gospel-harvest through this continent in the ensuing and future years. At present you have the largest field of action in respect to the number of souls, but we are humbly endeavoring to sow those seeds of grace which may grow up and spread in this immense country, which in ages to come will probably be the habitation of hundreds of millions. We trust we shall never forget your kind advice, but shall always remember that the Methodist societies through the world are eminently called to be one body, and to be actuated by one spirit; and that we have but one faith, one Lord, and one baptism."

It had become evident that Asbury's health was too much impaired to sustain alone the labors of the episcopate; the appointment of another bishop was therefore proposed. A discussion ensued for two days, not without some partisan feeling,[1] on the manner of his appoint-

[1] Lee's Life, etc., of Lee, p. 335.

ment; but Coke ended the proceeding, at a critical moment, by giving a written pledge that he would devote himself entirely to their service, as the episcopal colleague of Asbury, and visit the West Indies and France, only when there should be an opening, and he could be spared.

The session continued two weeks. Asbury says of it: "I preached on 'the men of Issachar that knew what Israel ought to do;' and again on 'Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.' There were souls awakened and converted. No angry passions were felt among the preachers. We had a great deal of good and judicious talk. The Conference rose on Thursday, the third of November. What we have done is printed. Bishop Coke was cordially received as my friend and colleague, to be wholly for America, unless a way should be opened to France. At this Conference there was a stroke aimed at the president eldership. I am thankful that our session is over. My soul and body have health, and have hard labor. Brother Whatcoat is going to the south of Virginia, Brother M'Claskey is going to New Jersey, Brother Ware to Pennsylvania, and Brother Hutchinson to New York and Connecticut. Very great and good changes have taken place."

Coke says: "All was unity and love. There was not a jarring string among us. For two or three years past we have had a sifting time after the great revivals, with which we were so long and so wonderfully blessed. But in all I saw the hand of Providence. The preachers now seem to have a full view of the Sylla and Charybdis, the rocks and whirlpools, which lie on either hand, and are determined to avoid them. They are like the heart of one man. Surely this sweet and entire

concord must be very pleasing to the Prince of Peace. It came from him, and to him let all glory be ascribed. Methinks it affords us a prospect of great days to come. At this Conference the Lord gave us signal proofs of his approbation. Every evening he was graciously present; seldom could the congregation break up till near midnight, and seldom were there less than half a dozen brought into the liberty of the children of God. One Sunday morning, when I endeavored to set forth the intercession of Christ, seven were justified under the sermon and the prayers which succeeded it."

CHAPTER XI.

REVIEW OF THE PERIOD: 1792–1796.

Importance of the Period — Numerical Declension — Sectional Growth — Statistics — Great Number of Locations — Public Fast and Thanksgiving — Slavery and Loyalty — Methodist Preachers and Politics — Washington's Letter to three of them — Ministerial Recruits — The Presiding Elders — Obituary Characterizations — Birchett — Scene at the Grave of Acuff — Prophetic Letter from Coke.

I HAVE treated, with the more minuteness, the interval between the General Conferences of 1792 and 1796, because it is one of the most important periods in the history of American Methodism. Within these years the denomination was chiefly founded in New England, in Canada, and in the valley of the Mississippi; for though it entered these sections somewhat earlier, it now really laid, in each of them, its permanent foundations, and stood forth a secured, a general, and more than a national form of American Protestantism.

Its aggregate membership shows a loss, since 1792, of more than nine thousand; it had been losing for three years,[1] the effect of the O'Kelly schism; but substantially it had never been more vigorous or more progressive. Away from the local disturbance it was not only fortifying all its positions, but gaining in numerical strength. In New England it more than doubled its circuits, and nearly doubled its preachers and communicants. It had now intrenched itself in all the Eastern

[1] It reported a diminution of white members as early as 1793, but the loss was then more than repaired by the gain of black members.

States. In Canada it had trebled its circuits, quadrupled its ministry, and nearly trebled its membership.

In the great West everything had been in transition, no accurate returns could be made, the members in one settlement to-day being in another to-morrow; they were, however, extending their cause, and they had now much more than double the numerical strength of Canada and New England together.

The chief force of the denomination was now in Virginia; she reported nearly 14,000 members; more than three times the number of the state of New York. Maryland ranked next, and had nearly 12,500; more than four times as many as Pennsylvania, and more than three times the number of New York. New Hampshire ranked lowest on the list of the states, her Methodistic roll having yet but sixty-eight names.

The aggregate membership, throughout the republic and Canada, was 56,664, the aggregate ministry 293; showing a loss, for the four years, of 9,316 members, and a gain of 27 preachers. On a closer examination of the statistics of the Minutes, we are startled by the evidence of ministerial privation and suffering proved by the frequency of locations. Though we find a gain of but 27 itinerants in these four years, there were actually received, at the Conferences, no less than 161 candidates; and but twenty deaths and six expulsions occurred in all this period. There were, meanwhile, no less than 106 locations. These located men, however, as has been amply shown, ceased not to preach; they hardly ceased to travel, though their tours were more circumscribed.

The decrease, occasioned chiefly by the Virginia controversy, excited alarm. A General Fast was proclaimed for the first Friday in March, 1796, "to be attended in all

the societies and congregations with Sabbatic strictness," and among the sins enumerated, as demanding this penitence, was that of slavery. The Church was called upon to "lament the deep-rooted vassalage that still reigneth in many parts of these free, independent United States; to call upon the Lord to direct our rulers, and teach our senators wisdom; that the Lord would teach our people a just and lawful submission to their rulers; that America may not commit abominations with other corrupt nations of the earth, and partake of their sins and their plagues; and that the Gospel may be preached with more purity, and be heard with more affection." In the following October a day of General Thanksgiving was observed, "to give glory to God for his late goodness to the ancient parent society from whom we are derived; that they have been honored with the conversion of hundreds and thousands within these two years last past;—for such a signal display of his power in the Methodist Society, within the space of twenty-six years, through the continent of America, as may be seen in the volume of our Annual Minutes; for the late glorious and powerful work we have had in Virginia and Maryland, and which still continues in an eminent and special manner in some parts of our American connection; for the many faithful public witnesses which have been raised up, and that so few (comparatively speaking) have dishonored their holy calling;—that we have had so many drawn from the depth of sin and misery to the heights of love and holiness among the subjects of grace, numbers of whom are now living, while others have died in the full and glorious triumph of faith;—to take into remembrance the goodness and wisdom of God displayed toward America, by making it an asylum for those who are distressed in Europe

with war and want, and oppressed with ecclesiastical and civil tyranny; and the rapid settlement and wonderful population of the continent;—for the general union and government, that they may be kept pure and permanent; for the admirable Revolution, obtained and established at so small a price of blood and treasure. And for African liberty; we feel gratitude that so many thousands of these poor people are free and pious."[2]

The declension of numbers ceased from this year; slowly but surely the returns increased until they rolled up in those grand aggregates which have astonished not only the denomination itself, but the religious world. It will be observed, in the proclamations of the Fast and Thanksgiving, that these early Methodist preachers hesitated not to utter their solemn convictions on political matters involving Christian ethics. They denounced slavery, and some of them suffered violence and imprisonment for doing so. They gloried in our "admirable Revolution," and sustained with hearty patriotism the government and laws. Their ardent loyalty was appreciated by the government, and as early as 1793, when the noted "Whisky Insurrection" in Pennsylvania was alarming the country, Washington wrote to Thornton Fleming, Valentine Cook, and William M'Lenahan, preachers in the midst of the agitation, thanking them for "using their influence, in their several spheres, to inculcate the necessity of a peaceable compliance with the law," which, by laying a duty on distilled spirits, had occasioned the outbreak. "Your conduct on this occasion, gentlemen," he adds, "is that of good citizens and certainly meritorious, and I hope and trust that those good and enlightened characters who have

[2] Bound Minutes, vol. i, p. 64.

at heart the true interest of the public, will endeavor to effect, by fair and just representations, what it would be extremely painful, however necessary, to carry into operation by compulsive means."

The young men received as recruits of the ministry, in this period, included some of our most memorable characters: William Burke, Tobias Gibson, Thomas Lyell, Lawrence M'Coombs, Hezekiah C. Wooster, Enoch Mudge, Daniel Ostrander, Henry Smith, William Beauchamp, Nicholas Snethen, Joseph Mitchell, John Broadhead, Dr. Sargent, Benjamin Lakin, John Finnegan, John Sale, Timothy Merritt, Peter Vannest, and many more, the mere catalogue of whose names is full of significance to students of our early annals.

During these years the Church was strongly officered: in the South by such presiding elders as Ira Ellis, Reuben Ellis, Richard Ivey, Philip Bruce, Nelson Reed, Isaac Smith, Thomas Bowen, Lemuel Green, Joshua Wells, Joseph Everett, William M'Kendree, Enoch George; in the Middle and North with such as John M'Claskey, Jacob Brush, Freeborn Garrettson, Richard Whatcoat, Thomas Ware, Thornton Fleming, Darius Dunham; in the East with such as Jesse Lee, Ezekiel Cooper, George Roberts, Sylvester Hutchinson; and in the West with such as Francis Poythress, Barnabas M'Henry, John Kobler, Valentine Cook, Charles Conaway, Daniel Hitt—men of might.

Of the score who fell at their posts in this period, several have heretofore been fully noticed, such as Philip Cox, the first of Methodist Book Agents; Jacob Brush, one of Lee's first colleagues in New England; Zadok Priest, the first who died in the Eastern field; Reuben Ellis, Richard Ivey, William Jessup, and Benjamin Abbott. Of the others we have but few words,

mostly from Asbury's pen, who was in too much haste to stop for details. Among them was Thomas Weatherford, "who lived the gospel, and died triumphant in the Lord;" George Browning, "a serious, devoted man, who died in peace;" Jacob Carter, who had long suffered from a wound received in the Revolutionary war, but preached six years zealously, and as a trained soldier was "a strict disciplinarian, a happy man, and one that feared not the face of any;" John Spraul, "a simple, honest man, who gave himself wholly to God and his work;" James Wilson, "whose piety, walking with God, fervor in prayer, and exhortations, were very great;" John Wynn, a young man "of address and natural eloquence, of an upright heart, a son of affliction, but willing to labor to the last;" Hardy Herbert, a "youth of genius, a pleasing speaker, of easy and natural elocution," "sentimental," but "not given to dissimulation," "loved and esteemed;" John Ahair, "meek-spirited, holy, zealous, weak in body, strong in faith and love," and who "sweetly slept in Jesus after a short but happy life;" Thomas Boyd, "a man of tender spirit and much afflicted, but who went to his long home in peace after giving strong proof of his piety by an innocent, holy life;" Emory Prior, whose "temper and spirit were a continual comment on 'Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ;'" Samuel Miller, "a man of genuine piety, deep experience, and useful gifts, preaching in both German and English; had he loved his ease he could have had it at home, but the love of God and souls moved him to spread the gospel;" Stephen Davis, "a man of established piety and great strength of memory, who wrought frequently with his own hands, and left what he possessed to his brethren in the ministry;" John Farrell, "of an honest

heart, and faithful in his labors, a plain, lively preacher, a friend to discipline and order," who died "with unbroken confidence, peace, and joy in the Lord Jesus Christ."

Two are recorded as falling in the distant Western field. One was Henry Birchett, "a gracious, happy, useful man, who freely offered himself for the dangerous stations of Kentucky and Cumberland." We have seen him making such an offer when sinking with disease, and when none other was ready to go, and, facing privation, small-pox, and savages, departing to his far off and solitary post to die there. "He was among the watchers," say the Minutes; "his meekness, love, labors, prayers, tears, sermons, and exhortations will not soon be forgotten. He wanted no appeal from labor, danger, or suffering." The other was Francis Acuff, "a young man of genius, much beloved, and greatly lamented." He died near Danville, Ky., in 1795, not twenty five years old. Though his career was brief, he left a profound impression; his extraordinary talents and great devotion won universal affection. We have seen the mournful interest felt in his death, as recorded by Asbury at "Acuff Chapel" in North Carolina. An historian of the Church has said that he left a name in the West which will be gratefully remembered while Methodism shall continue to live and flourish in that country. He adds an "instance of the strong attachment which was felt by those who were best acquainted with this man of God:" An Englishman, named William Jones, on his arrival in Virginia was sold for his passage. He served his time, four years, with fidelity, and was finally brought to the knowledge of the truth by means of Methodist preaching. As he had been greatly blessed under the

ministry of Acuff, when he heard of his death, he determined to visit his tomb. Though he had to travel a long distance through the wilderness, exposed to the Indians, yet his affectionate desire to see the grave of his friend impelled him forward. "When I came to the rivers," he said, "I would wade them, or if there were ferries they would take me over; and when I was hungry travelers would give me a morsel of bread. When I came to Mr. Greene's, in Madison County, I inquired for our dear Brother Acuff's grave. The people looked astonished, but directed me to it. I went to it, felt my soul happy, kneeled down, shouted over it, and praised the Lord."[2] What eulogy could surpass such a proof of gratitude and affection?

Toward the close of this period Coke, then in Ireland, hearing of the prosperity of Methodism here as elsewhere, conceived the sublimest destinies for it, and wrote to one of the itinerants, in the Western wilds, with his characteristic ardor. "The last year," he says, "was the greatest Methodism has ever known in Europe. O, my brother, labor to stir up our dear American brethren, who are children of God, to go on to perfection. Let them expect and pray for the universal reign of Christ. The time is hastening on when all the world shall bow the knee to Jesus. I am glad to hear that your district schools are going on so prosperously. May the Lord increase the number of them, and give his constant blessing to them for the sake of the rising generation. My dear brother, have great compassion on the poor negroes, and do all you can to convert them. If they have religious liberty, their temporal slavery will be comparatively but a small thing. But even in respect to this latter point, I do long for the

[2] Bangs, ii, 40.

time when the Lord will turn their captivity like the rivers of the south. And he will appear for them. He is winding up the sacred ball; he is sweeping off the wicked with the besom of destruction, with pestilence, famine, and war, and will never withdraw his hand till civil and religious liberty be established over all the earth. I have no doubt but if the body of Methodist preachers keep close to God, they will be the chief instruments of bringing about this most desirable state of things. Let us be a praying, preaching, self-denying, mortified, crucified set of men, (as, blessed be God! is the case with most of the preachers more or less at present,) and we shall carry the world before us."[3]

[3] Dated April 23, 1795. See South. Meth. Quart. Rev., Oct., 1859.

CHAPTER XII.

METHODISM IN THE SOUTH: 1796–1804.

Asbury and Coke Itinerating in the South — Losses by Locations — Slavery — Asbury's Interest for Africans — The Bishop and Black "Punch" — Asbury's Dejection — The Bishops in Charleston, S. C. — Burning of the Second College and Light-street Church — Death of Edgar Mills — Hammett's Failure — Asbury rests — His Sufferings — Death of Jarratt — Lee in the South — Asbury's Letter to him — Methodist Unity — Coke and Asbury — Lee in Charleston — His Birthday Reflections — Presentiments — Lee and Slavery — His Hard Fare — His Humor — Examples — His Success — An Extraordinary Quarterly Meeting — Great Prosperity — Camp-Meetings — Coke's Visits.

Asbury and Coke left the Conference together for the South on the 4th of November, 1795. They were soon among the scenes of the O'Kelly schism in Virginia. "I feel happy," wrote Asbury, "among the few old disciples who are left. My mind of late hath been in great peace. I am glad I have not contended with those violent men who were once with us. We ought to mind our work, and try to get souls to Christ; and the Lord can give us children, 'that we shall have after we have lost our former,' who shall say in our hearing, 'Give place that there may be room for us to dwell.' My dear aged friends told me their troubles and sorrow, which the divisions in the societies had caused." He adds, after seeing a spot memorable to us all, "I had solemn thoughts while I passed the house where Robert Williams lived and died, whose funeral rites I performed." Coke rejoiced, in the Virginia Conference, at "Maybery's Chapel," not only for the prospect in that

state, but in the whole country, for his vivid faith was prophetic of American Methodism. "About fifty preachers met us here," he says, "lodging at the plantations of our friends within a circle of three or four miles from the chapel. Nothing but love, peace, joy, unity, and concord, I may truly say, manifested themselves in this Conference. It was, in respect to love, the counterpart of our General Conference. O what great good does the Lord frequently bring out of evil! The siftings and schisms we have had have turned out to be the greatest blessings! Surely the Prince of Peace and lover of concord is about to accomplish great things on the continent of America by the means of the Methodists! After the necessary business was finished we spent about two days in band, each preacher in his turn relating the experience of his own soul, and the success of his ministry for the last year. It was a profitable season. I wish this useful method were pursued, as far as possible, in our European Conferences. We all parted on the Lord's day, after I had given the congregation, first, a comment on the 20th chapter of the Revelation, and then a sermon on Luke xiv, 26. Brother Asbury and I then separated for a time. We had before agreed to take different routes to Charleston. He took the seaside and I the upper country. A preacher went off a few days before me to make publications. I had now about eight or nine hundred miles to travel to Charleston, on the zig-zag line which I intended to pursue."[1]

Coke advanced rapidly southward. On reaching Camden, South Carolina, he remarks: "I lodged at the house of Brother Smith, formerly an eminent and successful traveling preacher. It is most lamentable to see so many of our able married preachers (or rather, I

[1] Meth. Mag., London, 1798.

might say, almost all of them) become located merely for want of support for their families. I am conscious it is not the fault of the people; it is the fault of the preachers, who, through a false and most unfortunate delicacy, have not pressed the important subject as they ought upon the consciences of the people. I am truly astonished that the work has risen to its present height on this continent, when so much of the spirit of prophecy —of the gifts of preaching—yea, of the most precious gifts which God bestows on mortals, except the gifts of his only-begotten Son and his Spirit of grace, should thus miserably be thrown away. I could, methinks, enter into my closet and weep tears of blood upon the occasion." He arrived at Rembert Hall, and was hospitably entertained; but on meeting another located preacher, bitterly repeats his lamentation over this quite universal loss of the Church. "The location of so many scores of our most able and experienced preachers tears my very heart in pieces. Methinks almost the whole continent would have fallen before the power of God, had it not been for this enormous evil."

Preaching almost daily on the route, witnessing the power of the word in his mongrel congregations, and enjoying the peculiar scenery of the South, he at last reached Charleston in the happiest mood of his habitually happy temperament. "The whole journey," he writes, "was very pleasing. The weather was continually mild, a few days only excepted. The lofty pine-trees through which we rode for a considerable part of the way, cast such a pleasing gloom over the country that I felt myself perfectly shut out from the busy world, at the same time that I was ranging through immeasurable forests. How many blessings of a temporal kind does our good God mix in our cup, besides that crowning blessing, the

consciousness of his favor! How inexcusable, therefore, would it be to murmur when enjoying so many comforts, even in a state of probation! O what must the rivers of pleasure be which flow at his right hand for evermore!"

Meanwhile Asbury had pursued, with much illness, his sea-side route. He was greeted, especially by the old Methodists, for he and they were now become veterans; yet he mourned to find their ranks rapidly becoming thinned. "I every day," he writes, "see and feel the emptiness of all created good, and am taking my leave of all: what is worth living for but the work of God?" But he found the children of his old and departed friends rising up in the Church. "So it is," he writes, "when the dear, aged parents go off, they leave me their children." The changes he witnessed in his great continental journeys, and his own growing infirmities, began to impress him with a sadness which breaks out often in touching expressions. He was still more depressed at the influence of slavery on the prospect of Methodism in the South. In South Carolina he writes: "My spirit was grieved at the conduct of some Methodists that hire out slaves at public places to the highest bidder, to cut, skin, and starve them; I think such members ought to be dealt with: on the side of oppressors there are law and power, but where are justice and mercy to the poor slaves? what eye will pity, what hand will help, or ear listen to their distresses? I will try if words can be like drawn swords, to pierce the hearts of the owners." Again he writes: "My mind is much pained. O to be dependent on slaveholders is in part to be a slave, and I was free-born! I am brought to conclude that slavery will exist in Virginia perhaps for ages; there is not a sufficient sense of

religion nor of liberty to destroy it. Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, in the highest flights of rapturous piety, still maintain and defend it. I judge in after ages it will be so that poor men and free men will not live among slaveholders, but will go to new lands: they only who are concerned in, and dependent on them will stay in old Virginia." In Virginia he drew up "an agreement for our officiary to sign against slavery: thus we may know the real sentiments of our local preachers. It appears to me that we can never fully reform the people until we reform the preachers; and that hitherto, except purging the traveling connection, we have been working at the wrong end. But if it be lawful for local preachers to hold slaves, then it is lawful for traveling preachers also; and they may keep plantations and overseers upon their quarters; but this reproach of inconsistency must be rolled away." What absurdities will not men defend! He writes at another time: "If the Gospel will tolerate slavery, what will it not authorize!" He almost despaired of the permanent prosperity of the denomination among the Southern whites, but had strong hope for it among the blacks. In South Carolina he writes: "Religion is reviving here among the Africans; these are the poor; these are the people we are more immediately called to preach to." He devoted special attention to them, and while in Charleston assembled them every morning between five and six o'clock for instruction and prayer. They loved him with their characteristic ardor, and wished to lavish upon him their humble gifts. While yet in Charleston he writes: "My mind has been greatly afflicted, so that my sleep has been much interrupted, yet there was a balm for this; a poor black, sixty years of age, who supports herself by picking oakum, and the

charity of her friends, brought me a French crown, and said she had been distressed on my account, and I must have her money. But no! although I have not three dollars to travel two thousand miles, I will not take money from the poor."

"O," he elsewhere exclaims, "it was by going down into the Egypt of South Carolina after those poor souls of Africans that I have lost my health, if not my life in the end! The will of the Lord be done." This he remarks after conversing with a slave "at a stone wall. Poor creature," he adds, "he seemed struck at my counsel, and gave me thanks." We are surprised, throughout his journals, with examples of interest for individual Africans; though conducting the sublime schemes of a more than national Church, his great soul was never too much absorbed by them to appreciate the value of individual men, even of the lowliest, for whom "no man cared." An affecting instance of not only his sympathy, but his usefulness in this respect is related by a southern itinerant, a fact which is historic in its character, as having given origin to a society of hundreds of members. As he was journeying on the highway, in South Carolina, he saw a slave, called "Punch," fishing on the bank of a stream. The bishop stopped his horse, and asked, "Do you ever pray?" "No, sir," replied the negro respectfully. Asbury alighted, sat down by his side, and instructed and exhorted him. The poor man wept; the bishop sung a hymn, knelt with the astonished slave in prayer, and left him. Twenty years passed, when the bishop was surprised by a visit from the negro, who had come over sixty miles to see him and thank him, for his well-directed instructions had been successful in his conversion. Forty-eight years after the first interview the Methodist

itinerant who relates the story was appointed to a plantation mission, where, it had been reported, there were many colored but unrecognized Methodists. He found there "between two and three hundred members in society." "I met a herdsman," he writes, "and asked him if there was any preacher on the plantation. 'O yes, massa, de old bushup lib here!' 'Is he a good preacher?' 'O yes,' was the reply; 'he word burn we heart!' He showed me the house. I knocked at the door, and I saw before me, leaning on a staff, a hoary-headed black man, with palsied limbs, but a smiling face. He looked at me a moment in silence; then, raising his hands and eyes to heaven, he said, 'Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation!' He asked me to take a seat. 'I have,' he said, 'many children in this place. I have felt for some time past that my end was nigh. I have looked around to see who might take my place when I am gone. I could find none. I felt unwilling to die and leave them so, and have been praying to God to send some one to take care of them. The Lord has sent you, my child; I am ready to go.' Tears coursed freely down his time-shriveled face."

It was "Punch;" the bishop's passing word had raised up an apostle, who had, through all these years, been ministering to his neglected people. "The little leaven worked," says the narrator. "One and another, praying to God for light and mercy, was brought to know Christ in the manifestation of the Spirit; the circle widened, until crowds would gather around the cabin doors of Punch for religious conversation and prayers. All this, of course, could not pass without the notice of the overseer, who felt himself called on

to oppose 'this way.' Being thus restricted, Punch could only speak privately, and in his own house, to a few friends who were awakened to the interest of their souls. One night he heard the overseer call him. As a few had met in his house for prayer, he went out anticipating rough consequences; but, to his astonishment, he found the overseer prostrate on the ground, crying to God for mercy on his soul. 'Punch,' he said, 'will you pray for me?'" The grateful slave knelt by his side till the overseer threw his arms, a regenerated man, around his black neck, and wept for thankfuluess. "This overseer afterward joined the Church, became an exhorter, and, after some time, a preacher."[3]

Asbury's allusions to his illness and dejection are increasingly frequent. He was suffering under a violent attack of intermittent fever, his old foe, which perhaps was unavoidable while he exposed himself to all climates and weather of the continent, exhausted most of the time by travel, and much of it by scarcity of food. "My depression of spirits," he says, "at times is awful, especially when afflicted; that which is deeply constitutional will never die but with my body. I am solemnly given up to God, and have been for many months willing to live or die in, for, and with Jesus." He was, in short, unconsciously guilty of overworking himself, and all who were immediately associated with him, and had been doing so for years. Even his horse had to share in his sufferings. "My horse," he writes, "trots stiff, and no wonder, as I have ridden him, upon an average, five thousand miles a year for the last five years successively."

At Charlestown he and Coke held the South Carolina Conference for a week, with preaching every day, and

[3] Wakeley's "Heroes of Methodism," p. 29.

great congregations. The news of the burning of the new academy, (substituted for Cokesbury,) and the adjacent Light-street Church, with the parsonage and several other buildings, in Baltimore, spread gloom over the session. It occurred on Sunday, the fourth of December, 1796, while the preacher was conducting divine service, "just twelve months to a day," says Lee, "from the time that Cokesbury College was burned." "The loss," wrote Asbury at the time, "we sustain in the college, academy, and church, I estimate from fifteen to twenty thousand pounds. It affected my mind; but I concluded God loveth the people of Baltimore, and he will keep them poor, to make them pure; and it will be for the humiliation of the society."

He sustained another heavy affliction about this time in the death of his old friend Wells, the merchant, who first received him in Charleston, and who had been the chief pillar of the Church there. "It was twelve long years," he writes, "next March since he first received Henry Willis, Jesse Lee, and myself, into his house. In a few days he was brought under heart distress for sin, and soon after professed faith in Christ; since that he hath been a diligent member in society. About fourteen months ago, when there was a revival of religion in the society, and in his own family, it came home to his own soul; he was quickened, and remarkably blessed, and continued so to be until his death. His affliction was long and very severe. The last words he was heard to say that could be understood were, that 'he knew where he was, that his wife was with him, and that God was with him.' He was one much for the feeling part of religion, a gentleman of spirit and sentiment and fine feelings, a faithful friend to the poor, and warmly attached to the ministers of the gos-

pel. This was a solitary day, and I labored under uncommon dejection. I preached in the evening, and was in great heaviness."[6] Asbury preached his funeral sermon, Coke performed the rites at his grave, and "delivered an oration," followed by an address from Asbury.

Coke remarks that "poor William Hammet is now come to nothing. When he began his schism his popularity was such that he soon erected a church nearly, if not quite, as large as our new chapel in London, which was crowded on the Lord's day; but, alas! he has now, upon Sunday evenings, only about thirty white people, with their dependent blacks. He has indeed gained a sufficiency of money to procure a plantation, and to stock it with slaves, though no one was more strenuous against slavery than he while destitute of the power of enslaving. During his popularity we lost almost all our congregation and society; but, blessed be God, we have now a crowded church, and a society, inclusive of the blacks, amounting to treble the number which we had when the division took place, and our people intend immediately to erect a second church. Our society of blacks in this city are in general very much alive to God. They now amount to about five hundred. The Lord has raised up a zealous man in Mr. M'Farland, a merchant, and partner with the late Mr. Wells. He amply supplies the place of his valuable deceased partner. His weekly exhortations to the blacks are rendered very profitable. It is common for the proprietors of slaves to name their blacks after the heathen gods and goddesses. The most lively leader among our negroes in this place has no other name than Jupiter. He has a blessed gift in prayer; but it appears to me ex-

[6] See vol. ii, 299.

tremely odd to hear the preacher cry out, 'Jupiter, will you pray?'"

Pontavice was with them, and preached twice, in French, to about two hundred of his countrymen. On the sixth of February, 1797, Coke and he embarked for Europe. Asbury wended his way southward, sick, but preaching. He again passes over the Western mountains, and returns in April, after traveling six hundred miles, with an inflammatory fever, and "a fixed pain in his breast." "I must be made perfect," he says, "through sufferings." He has hitherto traveled on horseback, but now procures a "sulky," and takes temporary refuge at Perry Hall. "God hath not left this house," he writes; "I felt great love for the family." He passes northward through Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New York, but cannot go to New England, for his "fever rises every night." In October we find him again in the South, but he is so feeble that the Virginia Conference advises him to rest until their next session, some four months. He spends the time in that state, entertained at the house of Dromgoole, and other Methodist families, revising his journals, writing a hundred letters, reviewing the interests of the Church, but restless as a caged eagle. Comparing the trials of European and American itinerants, he remarks there that "no minister could have suffered in those countries as in America, the most ancient parts of which have not been settled two hundred years, some parts not forty, others not thirty, twenty, nor ten, and some not five years. I have frequently skimmed along the frontiers, for four and five hundred miles, from Kentucky to Greenbrier, on the very edge of the wilderness, and thence along Tygart's Valley to Clarksburgh on the Ohio. These places, if not the haunts of

savage men, yet abound with wild beasts. I make no doubt the Methodists are and will be a numerous and wealthy people, and their preachers who follow us will not know our struggles but by comparing the present improved state of the country with what it was in our days, as exhibited in my journal and other records of that day."

In April, 1798, he resumed his travels, though still unwell. He passed to the interior of Maine, but in the early part of October again entered the South, accompanied by Lee, who greatly relieved his labors. In the remainder of the present period he traveled this section no less than six times, besides occasional excursions through Virginia to the West. He was accompanied now by a traveling companion, Lee, Whatcoat, Snethen, Hutchinson, or M'Caine, who did most of the preaching, the bishop following the sermons usually with exhortations, and preaching occasionally, as he had strength. His health evidently improved with this relief, notwithstanding his advancing age. He becomes more cheerful, and toward the end of the period increases the rapidity of his movements. He still writes pensively of the effect of time on his old friends in the South. The people multiply fast, but die fast. In many places in South Carolina he finds that he is preaching to the third generation; and, as he draws toward the close of the period, on his way through Virginia to the General Conference of 1804, he says, "I am taking leave of the people every visit. In old Virginia I have administered the word thirty years. There is a great mortality among the aged; our old members drop off surprisingly; but they all, by account, die in the Lord, and, in general, triumphantly. Now I have finished my awful tour of duty for the past month. To ride twenty

and thirty miles a day; to preach, baptize, and administer the Lord's Supper; to write and answer letters, and plan for myself and four hundred preachers; O Lord, I have not desired this awful day, thou knowest! I refused to travel as long as I could, and I lived long before I took upon me the superintendency of the Methodist Church in America, and now I bear it as a heavy load. I hardly bear it, and yet dare not cast it down, for fear God and my brethren should cast me down for such an abandonment of duty. True it is, my wages are great—precious souls here, and glory hereafter."

While in Virginia, in 1801, he heard of the death of his early friend, Jarratt, the Methodistic clergyman of Dinwiddie County, whose labors have been largely narrated in our pages. "The old prophet, I hear, is dead," he writes. "He was a man of genius, possessed a great deal of natural oratory, was an excellent reader, and a good writer. I have reason to presume that he was instrumentally successful in awakening hundreds of souls to some sense of religion in that dark day and time. How he died I shall probably hear and record hereafter." On arriving at Petersburgh he says, "There had been put forth a printed appointment for me to preach the funeral sermon of the late Rev. Devereux Jarratt, who has lately returned to his rest. My subject was Matt. xxv, 21: 'His Lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' Devereux Jarratt was settled in Bath parish, Dinwiddie County, Virginia, in the year 1763, and continued until February, 1801. He was a faithful and successful preacher. He had witnessed four or five periodical revivals of religion in his parish. When he began his

labors there was no other evangelical minister that he knew of in all the province. He traveled into several counties, and there were very few parish churches within fifty miles of his own in which he had not preached; to which labors of love and zeal were added preaching the word of life on solitary plantations, and in meeting-houses. He was the first who received our despised preachers; when strangers and unfriended, he took them to his house, and had societies formed in his parish. Some of his people became traveling preachers among us. I have already observed that the ministry of Mr. Jarratt was successful. I verily believe that hundreds were awakened by his labors. They are dispersed. Some are gone to the Carolinas, to Georgia, to the Western country; some perhaps are in heaven, and some, it may be, in hell."

It is inferable from these allusions that the friendship of Asbury and Jarratt continued to the end, though the latter stood aloof from the Methodists after the episcopal organization of the Church in 1784. He questioned the validity of its episcopacy, disapproved its stringent laws on slavery, and his private correspondence, indiscreetly published, detracts, if genuine, from the cordiality and catholicity of his Christian character as exhibited in his early intercourse with the denomination.[4]

We have but slight intimations of Lee's labors in the South while relieving Asbury, but enough to prove that

[4] His life, published in 1806, contained epistolary passages so exceptionable as to be unaccountable to Methodists who knew him. The book was prepared by the Rev. John Coleman, who had been a Methodist preacher. Bishop Meade, of Virginia, published an abridgment in 1840, omitting the questionable passages, but invidiously speaking of "the zealous exhorters of Mr. Wesley," and "their meetings for prayer and exhortation:" phraseology which has a special sense when used by such writers.

he was adequate to the responsible task. Asbury had hoped to meet him at the Wilbraham, Mass., Conference in 1797, but broke down before he could reach the New England boundary, and sent Joshua Wells to represent him, with a letter to Lee, in which he remarked: "I have sent Brother Wells, who, next to Jonathan, has seen much of my continual labors and afflictions for many days and miles. The burden lieth on thee. I hope it will force the Connection to do something, and turn their attention for one to assist or substitute me. I cannot express the distress I have had in all my afflictions for the state of the Connection. You and every man that thinks properly will find it will never do to divide the North from the South. Methodism is union all over: union in exchange of preachers, union in exchange of sentiments, union in exchange of interest. We must draw resources from the center to the circumference. Your brethren in Virginia wish you to come forth. I think the most general and impartial election may take place in the Yearly Conferences. Every one may vote; and, in General Conference, perhaps one fifth or one sixth part would be absent. I wish you to come and keep as close to me and my directions as you can. I wish you to go, after the Conference, to Georgia, Holston, and Kentucky, and perhaps come to Baltimore in June, if the ordination[5] should take place, and so come on to the Eastern Conference. You will

[5] "This has reference to a communication which Bishop Asbury made to the Conference at Wilbraham, which proposed the election of Whatcoat, Poythress, and Lee, as Assistant Bishops in the United States. It was rejected, being thought contrary to the form of Discipline." (Thrift; Memoir of Lee.) It must be remembered that the General Conference was not yet a delegated body, but included all the preachers. Asbury supposed, therefore, that ordinations of bishops, by order of all the Annual Conferences, might be legal without the order of a General Conference.

have to follow my advice for your health, steel as you are."

It is obvious from this letter that Asbury favored the elevation of Lee to the episcopate; it was in this sense that his "brethren in Virginia wished" Lee "to come forth." No man in the Connection was better fitted to be the colleague of Asbury, and we shall hereafter see that he barely escaped that onerous distinction.

The New England preachers yielded to the bishop's call, and Lee met him at New Rochelle and commenced with him the Southern tour. They were soon in the heart of Virginia, where they were surprised to see Coke riding up, "on a borrowed horse," says Asbury, "with a large white boy riding behind him on the same horse." Coke was a small man, and his contrast with his juvenile fellow-rider struck even the grave bishop as ludicrous. The doctor was supposed to be far away, pursuing his erratic course in Europe, if not in Africa. He brought now an Address to the General Conference, from the British Conference, praying that his late engagement to that body, which bound him to remain in America, might be canceled. No authority, save that of the next General Conference, could grant the petition; but Asbury, with the advice of the Virginia Conference, wrote, that "in our own persons and order we consent to his return, and partial continuance with you, and earnestly pray that you may have much peace, union, and happiness together. By a probable guess we have, perhaps, from 1,000 to 2,200 traveling and local preachers. Local preachers are daily rising up and coming forward with proper recommendations from their respective societies to receive ordination, besides the ordinations of the yearly conferences. From Charleston, South Carolina, where the Conference

was held, to the province of Maine, where another Conference is to be held, there is a space of about thirteen hundred miles; and we have only one worn out superintendent, who was this day advised by the yearly conference to desist from preaching till next spring, on account of his debilitated state of body."[6]

Lee left him, in repose, in Virginia, and passed rapidly over his Southern route, having about five hundred miles to travel and twenty-five appointments to meet in thirty days.[7] He reached Charleston by the beginning of 1798. He had been in the city, with Asbury and Willis, about thirteen years before, and preached the first sermon on that occasion; he now met there an Annual Conference, beheld two chapels, with seventy-seven white, and four hundred and twenty-one black Methodists, while, in the state, were four thousand six hundred members.

He penetrated into Georgia, where he preached twenty-one sermons in twenty-seven days. Returning northward he hastened along, preaching continually with an ardor and eloquence that stirred the Churches. On the 12th of March, 1798, he notes his birthday. "I am now," he says, "forty years old. I have enjoyed religion twenty-five years, have been in the Methodist Society twenty-four years and four days, and a traveling preacher about fifteen years. I feel, as much as ever, determined to spend my days for the Lord. My soul is still panting after God. I wish to be more than ever devoted to his service; and if I live to the Lord, I expect to be in heaven before I see forty years more; however strange it may appear, so it is, that I have often thought I should live till I was about fifty six years old. I do

[6] Drew's Life of Coke, New York, 1837, p. 280.
[7] Dr. Lee's Life of Lee, p. 339.

not pretend to say that the Lord has revealed this to me. It may be from an evil spirit, or it may be vain thoughts. Time will show; but if I were called to die to-morrow, I do not know that I should have any objections. I do feel a pleasing hope of leaving all my troubles when I leave the world; but if my life is prolonged, I hope to be the instrument of bringing a few more souls to God before I rest from my labors." The primitive Methodists were too much given to "presentiments;" Lee survived, full of vigor, to beyond his fifty-ninth year. He met Asbury again at the Virginia Conference, in Salem, where he preached the opening sermon, and says "we had a most powerful, weeping, shouting time; the house seemed to be filled with the presence of God; and I could truly say, it was a time of love to my soul. Bishop Asbury exhorted for some time, and the people were much melted under the word. Several new preachers engaged in the work, and we had a very good supply for all the circuits." Lee now turned aside to his paternal home a few days, to persuade his father, one of the earliest Methodists of Virginia, to provide in his will for the emancipation of his slaves; for though the son was opposed to the policy of the Church in legislating against the evil, he shared the opinions of his ministerial brethren generally against it. He afterward went to Richmond, and preached in the Court-house; the Society there was small, but was now erecting a temple which was dedicated in a few months. He again met Asbury at the Baltimore Conference, where he dedicated a new church, and then hastened to his hard, but favorite field of the East. But before the close of the year he was again abroad in the South. After traveling over the vast See of Asbury, in 1799, he says: "Our borders were greatly enlarged this year,

and the way was opening for us to spread further, and to send forth more laborers into the vineyard of the Lord. We had an addition to the Society of 1,182 members. Great peace and harmony prevailed throughout the Connection, both among preachers and people, and the prospect of a great revival of religion was more pleasing than it had been at any time for some years. In some places there was a good stir of religion, and many souls were brought into the liberty of the children of God."

In 1800 Asbury accompanied him, but Lee did most of the preaching. From three to six thousand people heard them weekly. Lee endured their hard fare as sturdily as the bishop; they often "had kitchen, house, and chamber all in one, and no closet but the woods;" or "found shelter in a log-cabin without doors, and with thirty or forty hogs sleeping under it." Their chief affliction, however, was the demoralization of the rustic population. There were "people grown to men's estate, and some that had families, who never heard a sermon till last summer," when the Methodist itinerants had reached them.

Down to the General Conference of 1804 Lee confined his labors to Virginia, where he was universally popular for not only his rare eloquence, but his unsparing devotion to his work. Withal, his characteristic and irrepressible humor gave him a species of power not without value. It attracted a class of minds which might not otherwise have come within his reach. It also enabled him to give effective rebukes, which rendered him a terror to evil-doers. "On one occasion," says his biographer, "when he was engaged in the opening services of public worship, he perceived the gentlemen intermixed with the ladies, and occupying seats appro-

priated to the latter. Supposing them to be unaware of the violation of our order, he respectfully stated the rule upon the subject, and requested them to take their seats on their own side of the house. All but a few immediately complied with the request. It was again repeated, and all but one left. He stood his ground as if determined not to yield. Again the rule was repeated, and the request followed it. But no disposition to retire was indicated. Leaning down upon the desk, and fixing his penetrating eye upon the offender for a moment, and then raising himself erect, and looking with an arch smile over the congregation, he drawled out, 'Well, brethren, I asked the gentlemen to retire from those seats, and *they* did so. But it seems *that man* is determined not to move. We must, therefore, serve him as the little boys say when a marble slips from their fingers—let him 'go for slippance.'" To say he slipped out of the house, is only to describe the fact in language borrowed from the figure by which the rebuke was conveyed. At another time, while engaged in preaching, he was not a little mortified to discover many of the congregation taking rest in sleep, and not a little annoyed by the loud talking of the people in the yard. Pausing long enough for the absence of the sound to startle the sleepers, he raised his voice, and cried out, 'I'll thank the people in the yard not to talk so loud; they'll wake up the people in the house!' This was 'killing two birds with one stone' in a most adroit and effectual manner." Anecdotes of the wit of Lee are still current all through the denomination. It was usually very genial, but could be sufficiently arrowy to make opponents and wags keep at a due distance or approach him with deference.

Lee's labors in Virginia gave a general impulse to

Methodism in that state. He was eminently a "revivalist," and expected appreciable results from every public meeting. He records a quarterly meeting at Jones's chapel, Sussex, at which every unconverted attendant was converted, black and white. The service lasted all day; when all the congregation within the house had been gathered into the fold, search was made outside for a single unreclaimed soul, but all had been rescued. "One of the preachers shouted aloud, and praised God that the Christians had taken the field, and kept the ground, for there was no sinner left. So they praised God together and returned home. Most of those who were converted were the children of Methodist parents, though some of their parents had been dead for many years." This was a period (1803) of great religious interest throughout Virginia; a thousand souls were added to its Churches. The sensation extended through the denomination, and more than seventeen thousand (17,336) were added to its membership. Lee speaks of it as the most prosperous year the Church had known since its origin in America. He attributes much of its success to camp-meetings, which were now introduced from the West into Virginia. Of one of the earliest, on Brunswick Circuit, the old and most famous battle-ground of Methodism in the state, he says: "Every discourse, and every exhortation given during the meeting, was attended by displays of divine power. Almost every hour and every minute was employed in the worship of God. A little time was spent in seeking refreshment and in necessary repose, but each endeavored to improve his time to the best advantage, and seemed satisfied only with the hidden manna of God's love and the living streams of his grace. More than a hundred living witnesses for Jesus were raised up at this meeting.'

These grove meetings had their justification in the dispersed condition of the population, the insufficiency of the chapels, and the great hosts which could be assembled after the ingathering of the harvests.

Coke, after his sudden appearance in Virginia, continued in the country for about six months, but has left no record of his labors.[8] In 1799 he was again in America, but his journal is lost. In the autumn of 1803 he made his ninth voyage hither, and spent the interval, between his arrival and the General Conference of 1804, in traversing the country and strengthening the Churches. After the Conference he left America to see it no more; we shall meet him at the sessions of 1800 and 1804.[9] Meanwhile, let us turn to other laborers and events in the Southern field.

[8] Etheridge's Coke, p. 292.

[9] Drew says, (Life of Coke, p. 308, note,) "It appears, from an inspection of his private papers, that in going and returning, he crossed the Atlantic no less than eighteen times. Of his first five voyages an account is published in his journals, and the particulars of another are inserted in the Methodist Magazine for the year 1798. Among his private papers some memorials are preserved, in his own handwriting, of his seventh and eighth voyages, with their dates respectively fixed. His ninth and last voyage is ascertained from his own letters now in the author's possession, and from the date of others addressed to Dr. Coke while in America in the year 1803."

CHAPTER XIII.

METHODISM IN THE SOUTH, CONTINUED: 1796–1804.

Prosperity of the Church — Great Revivals — Singular Conversion of Captain Burton — George Clark and Isaac Smith Pioneering — Strong Men of the South — George Dougherty — His Superior Talents — An Example — He is Mobbed and "Pumped" in Charleston — His Death — William Watters re-enters the Itinerancy — The Watters Family — William Gassaway — His Singular Conversion — Victory over an Enemy — He calls out Bishop Capers — Enoch George — William M'Kendree goes to the West — Tobias Gibson goes to the Southwest — William Ryland — His Eloquence — Chaplain to Congress — General Jackson — James Smith — Statistical View of Southern Methodism.

Peace was now generally restored in the southern section of the Church, and its societies were rapidly growing. The Hammett schism had dwindled nearly away, and some of its pulpits were already occupied by the itinerants. The O'Kelly secession still occasionally disturbed the societies of Virginia, and O'Kelly published a second pamphlet in 1799; but the leaders of the denomination, after having sturdily defended it, now adopted the wise policy of letting the recusants alone, and of pursuing quietly their accustomed labors, though they put upon record a statement of the facts of the controversy in an authorized reply to O'Kelly, from the pen of Snethen. It was "soft and defensive," says Asbury, "and as little offensive as possible."[1] Though the schism lingered, it gradually died from this period, and extraordinary "revivals" followed, not only in Virginia, but throughout the South. This renewed

[1] Journals, anno, 1800.

interest pervaded the whole city of Baltimore during the General Conference there in 1800, as will hereafter be noticed. Lee says it "began particularly in Old Town, where the people held meeting in a private house, and some of the preachers attended them in the afternoon of each day. The work then spread, and souls were converted in the different meeting-houses, and in different private houses, both by day and by night. Old Christians were wonderfully stirred up to cry to God more earnestly, and the preachers that tarried in town for a few days were all on fire. Such a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord had not been felt in that town for some years. About two weeks after the close of the General Conference we held our Annual Conference at Duck Creek Cross-roads, and a good many of the young converts and of the old Christians from Baltimore came over to the meeting. A wonderful display of the divine power was soon seen among the people, and many souls were brought into the liberty of the children of God in a short time. The Conference sat in a private room, while the local preachers, the young traveling preachers, and others were almost continually engaged in carrying on the meeting in the meeting-house, and in private houses. At one time the meeting continued without intermission for forty five hours, which was almost two days and nights."[2]

During a week, through which this Conference continued, "there were but few hours together in which there was no one converted." "Many people," continues Lee, "were converted in private houses when by themselves, or when they were at prayer in the family. I believe I never saw before, for so many days together,

[2] Hist. of Meth., p. 271.

such a glorious work of God, and so many people brought to the knowledge of God by the forgiveness of their sins. I think there were at least one hundred and fifty souls converted at that place in the course of the week. From that time and place the heavenly flame spread through the Eastern Shore of Maryland, and the lower counties of Delaware, in an uncommon manner. The preachers and people carried the fire with them to their different circuits and places of abode. Thousands will have cause to bless God for that Conference. I suppose the Methodist Connection hardly ever knew such a time of a general revival of religion, through the whole of their circuits, as they had about the latter part of the year 1800."

The excitement spread through most of Maryland and Virginia, and continued throughout the year. In 1801 it extended "greatly in most parts of the Connection," but prevailed chiefly in Maryland and Delaware. It was estimated that one thousand souls were converted on Baltimore District in the course of a few months. The revival overleaped the Western mountains, and we shall hereafter see that it prevailed in Kentucky and Tennessee like fire on the prairies. In Virginia Lee says that it was "remarkable to see what a number of young people who had been brought up by religious parents, were under serious impressions, and afterward happily converted."

On Northampton Circuit the labors of Thomas Smith, who will soon be more fully introduced to the reader, were signally successful. They provoked the opposition of "Churchmen," and an effort was made, by one of the clergy, to uproot the new "sect, everywhere spoken against," on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. He announced a public discourse against it, and a vast as-

sembly gathered to hear him preach, as was said, the "funeral sermon of Methodism." Among his hearers was Captain Burton; a name then familiar in the gay circles of the community, but afterward historical in the local Church for important services. Burton was a tenacious Churchman, and extremely hostile to the new denomination. The reverend antagonist violently attacked Wesley and his whole system, and with apparent effect. "The next day," writes Smith, "I met with our much-esteemed friend, Colonel W. Paramour, a member of long standing in the Methodist Episcopal Church, who gave me the outlines of the discourse, and remarked that he thought it would be expedient for Dr. Coke to return from England, and clear up Wesley's character, or we should be ruined as a Church. I told the colonel our cause was in the hands of God, and he would take care of it. Strange to tell, under this very sermon Captain Burton became so troubled that he could not rest day nor night, through fear that his minister might be wrong, and the Methodists right, after all. Three days having passed, and his trouble remaining, Mrs. Burton said to him, 'What is the matter with you? You have not been yourself since you came from church on Christmas day. What is the cause of your distress?' He told her that it was a fear that he and his minister were both wrong, and the Methodists, after all, were right. She advised him to send for a Methodist preacher to come and see him; but he objected, saying, 'How can I send for a people to come to my house whom I have so bitterly reviled?' She replied, 'Captain Burton, I have always thought the Methodists were the Lord's people, and if the Lord will forgive you, I am sure they will.' After having made up his mind to do as his wife advised, he sent me a note, requesting me to

come and see him. At the time I received the note I knew Captain Burton only by character: that he was, to Methodism, a Saul of Tarsus. Having read the note, I handed it to the gentleman of the house, who read it with astonishment, exclaiming, 'What can be the matter at Captain Burton's! But go,' said he; 'Captain Burton is a gentleman, and will treat you politely.'"

Smith sent him word that he would be at his house the following day. He went, expounded to the assembled family the doctrine and discipline of Methodism, prayed with them, "and left them all in tears." "Before night," he adds, "I received another note, saying, 'When can you come and preach for us?' I answered, 'On New Year's day, at three o'clock P. M. The next day, on my way to my appointment, I fell in with some of our warm friends going to the meeting, who said, 'The people don't believe you will preach at Captain Burton's to-day; they think he is making a fool of you; that he no more intends to let you preach at his house than he intends going to the moon.' 'Very well,' I said, 'we will go and test it.' When we arrived at the place we found everything as solemn as death. The people were awed into profound reverence. It was a difficult matter to get into the yard, the press of hearers was so great. When I got to my station, at the front door, in the midst of the crowd, I gave out a hymn. After prayer I preached on Rom. xvi, 19, 20: 'I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil, and the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.' Before the sun rose the next day the enemy's flag was struck, and the banner of Jesus Christ was waving there. This night, this memorable night, never to be forgotten,

excelled all I had ever seen. At the very commencement of the meeting the Spirit of the Lord came as a rushing, mighty wind; the people fell before it, and lay all over the floor. The work continued all night, nor did it stop in the morning, but continued for thirteen days and nights without interruption; some coming, some going, so that the meeting was kept up day and night. I did the preaching, and our friends did the praying. I have stood in the yard in the evening, and seen scores of people coming along the roads, and across the fields. Sometimes they would gather up in the fields or on the roadside and form a prayer-meeting, and a number of souls have been converted in these outdoor meetings; but Burton's house was the center to which all came. I cannot dwell on particulars, they would make a book. At the close of this meeting we formed a new class of fifty-five members, who never had their names on a class paper before. Burton's family, white and colored, were converted to God, with many other whole families, and his house was made a regular preaching place, where the new class met, and also a class of about forty colored members. Thus, in about thirteen days, we added about ninety-five to the Church on probation. Burton and his wife headed the class paper, then all their children, then followed nearly all their neighbors. Some years after they built themselves a chapel, and there has been a fine society in that place ever since."

Burton's Chapel was long a humble but historical monument of Methodism in that part of Virginia. More than seven hundred members were added to the Church on this circuit by the close of the year. "Glory to God!" exclaimed the itinerant, as he returned to it after the Conference of 1801, 'the work

still goes on gloriously! Our field extends over two counties, and is everywhere white unto the harvest." By the end of his second year the additions amounted (for the two years) to one thousand and ninety members.

In 1802 the interest extended. At Rockingham a meeting continued nine days; "business was wholly suspended, merchants and mechanics shut up their shops," and "little else was attended to but waiting upon the Lord." The people crowded in from all the surrounding country, and hundreds were converted. In North and South Carolina and Georgia similar scenes occurred, and lasted through most of our present period. High up the Yadkin River "the work of the Lord was very great, and more or less people were converted at public preaching. One preacher said he preached as often as his strength would admit, and the power of God attended his meetings, and from three to four, and sometimes from seven to eight, were brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God at a meeting." Lee formed new societies of fifty converts at a time.

"In North Carolina," continues the historian, "the work of the Lord spread greatly, and was known both among saints and sinners." In South Carolina "religion gained ground, and in many places it may be said to have been all in a flame." In Georgia "the Lord was pleased to favor the people with an uncommonly prosperous time in religion, and many souls were brought to God at public and private meetings." Many individual societies were reinforced by a hundred additions at a time. Quarterly meetings were frequently turned into protracted camp-meetings, and it seemed, to the sanguine evangelists, that the whole population was

about to bow before the power of their word. In short, the subsequent predominance of Methodism in the South can be traced to the impulse that it now received. It spread out into neglected regions, where the people, in the absence of religious provisions, had been sinking into barbarism. Lee says that about the beginning of this general awakening George Clark went to St. Mary's in Georgia to preach, and if possible to form a circuit. He found the people in different places entirely destitute of preaching, and he had to direct them when to stand, when to kneel, etc. Some who were grown to years said they had never heard a sermon or prayer before in all their lives. "I suppose," he adds, "the two counties where he traveled principally, Glen and Camden, were at that time less acquainted with the public worship of God than any other part of the United States. However, before the close of the year, some of the people became constant attendants on the word, were much reformed in their lives, and some of them were truly converted to God. On the 23d day of December, 1799, there was a Society formed in the town of Augusta, in Georgia, which was the first class ever joined together in that town. After some time the Society built a convenient meeting-house."

There were many such regions in the South in these early times. A Methodist writer, speaking of the labors of Isaac Smith, who went forth in South Carolina, forming a circuit, which included the suggestive names of "The Cypress, Four Holes, Indian Fields Saltketlepen, Cattle Creek, and Edisto River," says that the state of moral destitution throughout all this region was melancholy in the extreme; that there were whole families who had never seen a preacher nor heard a sermon; that literally he had to go into the highways and

hedges, to penetrate the swamps and canebrakes in search of the demoralized people, early and late, by day and by night, through the heats of the burning sun, and exposed to the rains and to the poisonous miasma of the low country, risking health, and life itself.

In January, 1804, Asbury wrote to Fleming: "Grace, mercy, and peace from Him that was, and is, and is to come, be with thee and thine, now and forever. From Kentucky I came on to Tennessee. I found the Methodists generally living and growing. In North and South Carolina and Georgia some very memorable displays in large meetings. The north side of Virginia you have heard of; the south side is glorious. At Dromgoole's old chapel, at a great meeting, near one hundred professed faith, besides many blacks. In Maryland, you have heard, at a camp near Prysterstown, some hundreds were moved; many were converted, and some restored. In Jersey, Brother Morrell writes, the Presbyterians are greatly stirred up, riding about and preaching upon week days. Upon Connecticut River they have had a field-meeting. The people came from a town called Middletown, in a boat, and some were converted on board the boat; and the work spread in the town. In the district of Maine we have good times, down to the very east end of the continent. In the West and South Conferences the increase, after the dead and expelled are reckoned, is between three and four thousand."

Southern Methodism was powerfully manned during this period. M'Kendree, Whatcoat, George, Everett, Bruce, Blanton, Spry, Mead, Jenkins, Lee, (the latter part of the time,) Hitt, Wilson Lee, Dougherty, M'Caine, were among its presiding elders; while such men as Sale, Harper, Gibson, Smith, Hill, Reed, Bloodgood, Sargent, Fleming, Lyell, M'Coy, Myers, Gassaway, Walters,

M'Combs, Daniel Asbury, Wells, Cowles, Jones, Frye, Roberts, were among the circuit itinerants.

George Dougharty occupies a conspicuous place in the early annals of Southern Methodism. "Among the men of that day, whose character looms grandly up from the misty past," none, writes a bishop of the South,[3] filled a larger space in the Church. We know little of his early life, except that he was born in South Carolina, "reared in Newberry District, near Lexington line,"[4] and "used to cut ranging timber on the Edisto River." He was early converted, and "came into our neighborhood," says one of his fellow-itinerants, "and taught a school; in every crowd where the Methodist schoolmaster appeared he was a mark for the finger of scorn;" but he maintained his integrity, applied himself to study, and was at last discovered and summoned out to preach, by an itinerant on the neighboring Rush River Circuit, who took him to the South Carolina Conference, where he began his regular ministerial career in 1798. "By application and perseverance he took," says his fellow-evangelist, "a stand in the front rank of the South Carolina band of pioneers, marshaling the armies of the sacramental host from the sea shore to the Blue Ridge." He was ungainly in his person; tall, slight, with but one eye, and negligent of dress; but his intellect was of lofty tone, his logical powers remarkable, and his eloquence at times absolutely irresistible. An example is recorded, which occurred at one of those mixed woods-meetings which the primitive condition of the people rendered common in that day, and at which all sorts of theological speculations came into collision. He had been appointed to

[3] Bishop Andrew, in Nashville Ch. Advocate.
[4] Rev. D. Derrick, in So. Ch. Ad.

follow, without intermission, a preacher of another sect, who dealt out lustily opinions which, according to Methodism, were dangerous heresies. Dougharty, on rising, struck directly at these errors; his argumentation became ignited with his feelings, his voice rose till it echoed "in thunder peals" over the throng and through the forest; dropping polemics, he applied his reasoning in overwhelming exhortation, "urging compliance with the conditions of salvation. The power of God came down, and one universal cry was heard through all that vast concourse. Some fell prostrate on the ground, others rising to flee from the scene fell by the way." Dougharty, turning round on the stand to the heretical preacher, "dropped on his knees before him, and in the most solemn manner, with uplifted hands and streaming eyes, begged him, in God's name, never again to preach the doctrines he had advanced that day. The scene was overwhelming, and beggars all description."

One of our best authorities in the South, who often heard him preach, says: "His mind seemed to me, in its relation to the tabernacle which it inhabited, like some mighty engine that makes the timbers of the vessel it is propelling tremble. So interested was he in the study of the Hebrew, that I remember reading to him in our English Bible, while he read in his Hebrew Bible, until I observed the powerful workings of his mind had completely exhausted him. He was far in advance of the period in which he lived, in his estimate and advocacy of education. As early as 1803 he was laboring in his native state for the establishment of an academy, to be under the control of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He was about six feet in stature, his shoulders a little stooping, his knees bending slightly forward, his walk tottering, and, in his general appear-

ance, a very personification of frailty. He had lost one eye after he reached manhood by small-pox; and the natural beauty of a fair face had been otherwise dreadfully marred by the ravages of the same malady. His hair was very thin, and he wore it rather long, as was the custom of itinerant preachers in his day. His costume, like that of his brethren generally, was a straight coat, long vest, and knee breeches, with stockings and shoes, sometimes long, fair-topped boots, fastened by a modest strap to one of the knee buttons to keep the boots genteelly up. And in those days it was a beautiful clerical dress, where the wearer was a person of good taste and genteel habits. But in these little accomplishments Dougharty was sadly wanting; indeed, I would say that his negligence was so great as to form a positive fault. Nowithstanding his bodily weakness he preached almost daily, and often twice in a day, riding large circuits or districts, as his appointment might be, for seven or eight years successively. It seemed as if his great mind and warm heart infused into his feeble frame a preternatural life and energy. His sermons were frequently long, and always characterized by a glow that seemed akin to inspiration. His supremacy as a preacher in his day was never disputed, to my knowledge, by any competent witness. I have no hesitation in expressing the opinion that George Dougharty had no equal in his day among his brethren."[5]

In 1801 he was attacked by a mob in Charleston, S. C., provoked by the anti-slavery action of the General Conference. They dragged him from the church to a pump, where they pumped upon him till he was exhausted, and would probably have perished, had not a heroic Methodist woman interfered, stopping up the

[5] Rev. Dr. Lovick Pierce, in Sprague, p. 291–295.

mouth of the pump with her shawl. She held the mob abashed by her remonstrances till a courageous citizen threw himself into their midst with a drawn sword, rescued their victim, and led him to a place of shelter. He never recovered from this inhuman treatment, but lingered with consumption till the South Carolina Conference of 1807, when his voice was last heard, in that body, proposing and advocating a resolution, that any preacher who should desert his appointment "through fear in times of sickness or danger," should never again be employed by the Conference, a requisition necessary in that region of epidemics. He "spoke," says the old Minutes, "to the case with amazing argument and energy, and carried his cause like a dying general in victory." He died this year at Wilmington, N. C., where he was appropriately "buried in the African Church."[6] Joshua Wells, under whose roof he expired, says "he spoke of death and eternity with an engaging, feeling, sweet composure, and manifested an indescribable confidence, love, and hope, while he said, 'The goodness and love of God to me are great and marvelous, as I go down the dreadful declivity of death.' His understanding was unimpaired; and so perfect was his tranquillity, that his true greatness was probably never seen or known until that trying period."

His ministerial brethren commemorated him in their Minutes as "a great preacher," of "an exceedingly capacious" mind, having "a fund of knowledge," and as "totally dead to the world, and indefatigable in labor and study." They pronounce him the right character "if they wanted a guide, a pillar, or a man to stand in the gap."[7]

[6] Minutes of 1808.

[7] The lady who rescued Dougharty from the mob was Mrs. Martha Kugley. "The wetting she received at the pump from the heartless

William Watters, the first native American Methodist preacher, reappears in the appointments for the year 1801, after having been located about eighteen years. During his location he preached habitually, and often at distances of many miles from his home. He was now fifty years old, mature in health and character, of extreme amiability, good sense, self-possession, and soundness of judgment. During most of our present period he labored at Alexandria, Georgetown, and Washington. "I enjoyed," he writes, "good health and great enlargement of heart for the ingathering of souls to the Lord's kingdom, with considerable life and liberty in all the ordinances of his house, but in none more than in dispensing the words of eternal life. It was to me more than the increase of corn, wine, or oil. I often enjoyed through the silent hours of the Sabbath nights, after laboring all the day and part of the night, such a sacred sense of the divine presence and nearness to the throne of grace by the precious blood of the covenant, that all sleep has been banished from my eyes, while I have felt

> 'That solemn awe that dares not move,
> And all the silent heaven of love.'"[8]

He had been gradually gathering members into the societies of his appointments, when the great revival of these times swept over his field. "Many," he says, "were certainly reformed and converted to the Lord, but many

ruffians was the cause of her premature death. Like Dougharty, she was of a consumptive habit, and the cold acquired that wintry night never left her, and she and Dougharty died about the same time."—Annals of Southern Methodism, by Rev. Dr. Deems, p. 228. Nashville, 1856. Bangs says that "of all those concerned in this persecution not one prospered. Most of them died miserable deaths, and one of them acknowledged that God's curse lighted upon him for his conduct in this affair."

[8] Short Account, etc., p. 137.

made a great noise and ado that knew too little of what they were about, and, from the greatness of the work, the spirit of the times, as well as from several other causes that then existed, which I do not think proper to mention, I never found more difficulty in separating the chaff from the wheat without endangering the real work. There were many in the course of twelve months added unto the Church, numbers of whom continue to adorn their profession, yet the spirit and genius of the revival was not so congenial to my feelings as the less revival with which we had been blessed two years before. But I am sensible, and wish to be more so, that there are diversities of operations, the same God which working all in all, and that it belongeth not unto me to dictate, but to follow the leadings of a kind Providence, and that word of inspiration that gives us infallible instructions in all such matters, so that however things may turn up from the enemy, from sinners, or the injudicious among us, all will end well if we do but with patience and perseverance pursue the work given us to do." These are characteristic remarks.

He located again in 1806, and we get but few later glimpses of him. Boehm, the traveling companion of Asbury, says that in February, 1811, while in Virginia, they "rode to William Watters's. He retired from the regular work in 1806, but his heart was always in it. He was now living in dignified retirement on his farm on the Virginia side of the Potomac, opposite Georgetown. He was the first traveling preacher raised up in America. Philip Gatch commenced nearly the same time. They were intimate, and in their declining years corresponded with each other. Watters was a stout man, of medium height, of very venerable and solemn appearance. Bishop Asbury

and he were lifetime friends. The bishop was acquainted with him before he was licensed to preach. When these aged men met on this occasion they embraced and saluted each other with 'a holy kiss;' and the bishop, writing of this visit in his journal, speaks of him as 'my dear old friend, William Watters.' He was distinguished for humility, simplicity, and purity. Few Lolier ministers has the Methodist Church ever had than William Watters. I rejoice that I was permitted to hear him preach, and to be his guest; to eat at his table, to sit at his fireside, to enjoy his friendship and hospitality. His house was for years a regular preaching-place on the circuit. In 1833, at the age of eighty-two, he died in holy triumph. His name will go down to the end of time, bearing the honored title of 'The First American Traveling Preacher.'"

The biographer of his friend Gatch, who commenced preaching in the same year with him, but joined the itinerancy a little later, describes Watters in 1813 as a venerable looking man; his head white, his form erect, his countenance full of benevolence.[9] For some time before his death he was totally blind. One of our best Church antiquarians says: "The family to which Watters belonged was perhaps one of the most remarkable in the early annals of American Methodism. His mother died in her ninety-second year. There were seven brothers and two sisters. They were among the first of those whose hearts and houses were opened to receive the Methodist preachers when the latter came into Harford

[9] Mem. of Gatch, p. 153. "It is strange that so little is known of the latter years of so great and good a man. He was one of the most holy and useful men of the many who have adorned Methodism—a Virginian Christian gentleman of the right type. His upright walk and sterling character were proverbial."—Letter of D. Creamer, Esq., Baltimore, to the author.

County, Md.; and several of the brothers, at an early period, became official members of the Methodist Societies. Stephen was a local preacher, Nicholas entered upon the itinerant work in 1786, and closed his useful life while stationed in Charleston, S. C., in 1805. One of the earliest Methodist churches in Maryland was erected on the farm of Henry Watters, and was only removed a few years since in order to give place to a larger one. It was there that the famous Conference was held in 1777, when the English preachers, with the exception of Asbury, gave up the field, and returned to their native country. The old homestead is still in possession of the family; Henry Watters, Esq., the oldest son of his father, and class-leader in the Church, is the proprietor. What imperishable memories cluster around the sweet rural mansion where Pilmoor and Boardman, Coke and Asbury, so often lodged and prayed! Verily, 'the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance.'"[10]

William Gassaway has left many an interesting tradition in the Southern Church. He was one of those lowly men whom Methodism so often rescued from vice and obscurity, and made princes in Israel—a wild, profligate youth, a hard drinker, a formidable pugilist, a famous fiddler in bacchanalian scenes, and afterward as ardent a saint and apostle. A southern bishop[11] has endeavored to rescue his memory, and says, he chanced one day to attend a Methodist meeting, where the gospel came to his heart in power, arousing him from his guilty dream of pleasure and security. When penitents were invited forward for prayers, he, with others, accepted the invitation. This surprised everybody. The dancing people said, "What

[10] Rev. Dr. Hamilton, in Sprague, p. 49. [11] Bishop Andrew.

shall we do for a fiddler?" Every one had something to say about Gassaway. Many prophesied he would not hold out long. But those who knew him best said, "He is gone! the Methodists have got him! he will never play the fiddle, or drink, or fight any more!" His religious impressions were profound, but he was almost utterly ignorant of the plan of salvation, and expected to be saved by self-mortification. For some time, detesting himself as a sinner, he would not even drink. Passing a stream he allowed his horse to drink, saying, "You may, you are not a sinner; but I am. I will not drink." There remains a fragmentary record of his life about this time,[12] in which he says he was totally ignorant of the fundamental truths of Christianity. "I understood that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world; but that he had died for my sins, and for his sake, and his sake alone, the Father would forgive my sins, was what I knew nothing at all about; and, what was worse, I knew of nobody to whom I could go, but one man, who was an elder in the Presbyterian Church; and so little did I know of the true spirit of Christianity, I thought, as I had been up for the Methodists to pray for me, that this man would show me no favor. But at last, so pungent were my convictions, that I concluded to go and see this old Presbyterian man anyhow. So I went. I did not know how to make any apology, so I just told him plainly my condition. Think of my surprise when he took me into his open arms, saying to me, 'The Spirit of the Lord is with you. See that you don't quench that Spirit. Make my

[12] Bishop Andrew quotes from a MS. in possession of Colonel Thomas Williams, of Montgomery, Ga., "whose house was for many years one of Gassaway's homes."

house your home. I will give you all the help I can.'"

This good Presbyterian was Major Joseph M'Junkin, of Union District, S. C., a man of genuine piety and recognized Christian standing, who knew how to appreciate Gassaway's peculiar character, and now became his instructor, for he kept him at his house some weeks, that he might guide and fortify him, exhorting him "never to look back, but to persevere to the end, for only such could be saved." He put into the hands of the untutored inquirer Baxter's "Saints' Rest." Gassaway says that he took the book, and walked out into the woods near a little stream. He had been long weeping over his sins, and confessing them to God, and in deep sorrow he sat down to read. He says he had not read long "before the Lord, the King of glory, for the sake of his Son, baptized him with the Holy Ghost and fire from heaven," and that he was never better satisfied of the truth of any fact in his life than he was of his conversion at this time. "With no human being near me, I immediately got on my knees, and thanked God, and then and there dedicated myself, soul, body, and spirit, to him, and covenanted to be his for ever. I returned immediately to the house of my friend, and told him the whole story. He blessed God, called his family together, told them what had taken place, and then we all united in prayer and in praise."

Having thus found his way into the "path of life," he was soon leading others into it more zealously than he had ever led them in the dance. Joining the Methodists, he became an exhorter, then a local preacher, and, at last, a genuine hero of the itinerancy, in which, for about a quarter of a century, he was one of the most

laborious and successful evangelists of the South, spreading out Methodism over much of Georgia and North and South Carolina. He "had a large family, and poor pay," says one of his contemporaries,[13] and had to locate in 1813, but continued to labor with energy and success. He is described as a man exceedingly given to prayer, and of the most childlike and absolute faith in prayer, committing his ways unto God, and thenceforward being "careful for nothing." Not a few examples of the power of his prayers and preaching are still current in the Southern Church. While traveling on a circuit, which included Camden, S. C., a very powerful religious interest broke out, and a considerable number of persons were converted. Among these was a lady whose husband, then absent, was noted for his violent hostility to religion. When he returned he became furious, ordered his wife to have her name taken off the Church books, and swore he would cowhide the preacher. Many of Gassaway's friends admonished him to keep away, for they knew the violent spirit of his opposer; but, "according to the preacher's wont, he carried this matter to God in prayer, and seems to have come to the conclusion that, in the order of God, he was on that circuit, and as Camden was in his circuit, it was his duty to go there and preach, and leave God to manage consequences. At the appointed time accordingly he was found at his appointment. He arose to preach, and there sat his enemy before him, with a countenance of wrath and storm, and a cowhide in his hand, prepared to execute his threat. Gassaway gave out his hymn, and sang it; he knelt in prayer, and God was with him. He arose from his knees, took his text, and proceeded to preach; but before he con-

[13] Autobiography of Joseph Travis, p. 197. Nashville, 1856.

cluded he saw that his persecutor was yielding, and, at the close, the angry man, with streaming eyes, knelt and cried out for the prayers of the people as if his last hour were come. "It was not long before he was happily converted, and united with his wife in the way to heaven, and of course he became one of Gassaway's warmest friends."[14]

"I was well acquainted with him," says one of our authorities. "When but a youth I was accustomed to hear him preach at my uncle's in Chester District, South Carolina; and when I entered the itinerancy, it was in the same Conference to which he belonged. He was a sound, orthodox preacher, and, on suitable occasions, argumentative and polemical, a great lover and skilfull defender of Methodist doctrines and usages. He was a pleasant and sociable companion, always cheerful. I never saw him gloomy. I frequently heard of him after his location; he was the same laborious, zealous, and holy minister of the gospel. He lived to mature old age. 'And he died,' no doubt as he lived, 'full of faith and the Holy Ghost.' But where is the periodical or paper, religious or secular, that has recorded his exit? 'The righteous should be in everlasting remembrance,' and William Gassaway ought to be numbered with the blessed company."[15]

William Gassaway had the honor of calling out to the itinerant field Bishop Capers, who speaks of him as "that most godly man, and best of ministers,"[16] and began his own distinguished career by riding a circuit with the humble itinerant, and "exhorting" after his sermons

Enoch George resumed his itinerant labors in 1799

[14] Bishop Andrew. [15] Travis, p. 198.
[16] Bishop Wightman's "Life of Capers," p. 76. Nashville, 1858.

on Rockingham Circuit, Virginia,[17] where, he says, "the windows of heaven were again opened, and grace descended upon us." In 1800 he had charge of a district extending from the Alleghanies to the Chesapeake Bay, and requiring from one thousand to twelve hundred miles travel quarterly. His excessive labors brought back his old infirmities, for "in those days," he says, "the preachers 'ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears' in doing the work given them, and exerted themselves not only to increase the numbers, but the holiness of the people. It was our duty to attend diligently to the Africans, in forming and establishing societies; but as their masters would not allow them to attend the meetings during the day, we were obliged to meet them at night. Oftentimes this kept us up and out till late, in this unhealthy climate, which had a destructive influence upon our health. We were 'very zealous for the Lord of hosts;' and having for the most part no family ties, we wanted 'but little here below,' and were ready to 'count all things but loss,' that we might 'take heed unto, and faithfully fulfill, the ministry we had received of the Lord Jesus.'" He broke down, was again located, and taught school in Winchester, Va., for his support. He preached meanwhile on Sabbaths, and having recovered sufficient strength re-entered the itinerancy in 1803, and labored successively and mightily on Frederick Circuit, Baltimore District, Alexandria District, Georgetown, Frederick, Montgomery, and Baltimore Circuits, and Baltimore and Georgetown Districts, till his consecration to the episcopate.

William M'Kendree traveled during the present period, down to the end of the century, on vast districts

[17] Meth. Quart. Rev., 1850, p. 253.

in Virginia: on the Richmond District from 1796 to 1799, superintending five great circuits in Eastern and Southern Virginia, to which were added, at the close of the first year, three more in the mountainous west of the state, thus bringing him further under frontier training for his great Western mission, which was now at hand. His labors were almost superhuman, interfering, he says, with his studies and impairing his nervous system; but he rejoiced in the rapid extension of the Church. In 1799 he was appointed over a district, which comprised no less than nine circuits, extending along the Potomac, in Maryland and Virginia, and reaching from the waters of the Chesapeake to the heights of the Alleghanies. In 1800 he was again on his Richmond District, but had passed round it only once when Asbury and Whatcoat met him, with orders to pack up forthwith, and throw himself into the great Western field as leader of its itinerant pioneers. "I was," he says, "without my money, books, or clothes. These were all at a distance, and I had no time to go after them; but I was not in debt, therefore unembarrassed. Of moneys due me I collected one hundred dollars, bought cloth for a coat, carried it to Holston, and left it with a tailor in the bounds of my new district. The bishops continued their course: my business was to take care of their horses, and wait on them, for they were both infirm old men." They were soon descending the western slope of the Alleghanies, whither we shall hereafter follow them.

Tobias Gibson, also, after seven years of hardest service in Georgia and South Carolina, penetrating, in 1795, to the Holston region, departed in 1799 for the farther west, the first Methodist pioneer of the Southern Mississippi Valley; we shall soon have occasion to greet him there.

Among the host of able men of this period in the ministry of the South, two appeared who presented pre-eminent attractions as eloquent preachers, William Ryland and James Smith. The former was an Irishman, and a born orator. He joined the itinerancy in 1802, and continued in it forty-two years. He was six times elected chaplain to Congress, and was pronounced, by the statesman, William Pinckney, the greatest pulpit orator he had ever heard. General Jackson admired him enthusiastically while senator; and arriving in Washington for his inauguration as President of the nation, hastened, the next day, to see him, the itinerant being then on a sick bed. "General," said Ryland, "you have been elected President of the United States. No man can govern this great nation, no sane man should think of doing so, without asking wisdom of God to direct him, and strength to support him;" at the same time, suiting his actions to his words, he drew the general down to the side of the bed, and offered up a fervent prayer for him, and also for the peace and prosperity of the country. Upon leaving the room, Jackson took him by the hand, saying, "I know that your Church makes no provision for her preachers in the decline of life; but I will see that you are taken care of in your old age." In a few days after his inauguration he sent Ryland a chaplain's commission, and stationed him at the Navy Yard in Washington City.[18] For seventeen years he occupied this office, to the honor of his Church and the naval service. He was a diligent student, and acquired a knowledge not only of general English literature, but of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. He was fastidiously exact in all his habits, extremely neat in his person, wearing the simple clerical garb of

[18] Rev. Dr. Hamilton, in Sprague, p. 393.

his brethren to the last. He was six feet in stature, of robust frame, and in extreme age his countenance was fresh and delicate as that of a woman; his manners dignified, his voice of great compass and surpassing melody; his pronunciation faultless, his diction pure, terse, Saxon. A church, in the national capital, bears his name.

James Smith joined the Baltimore Conference in the same year with Ryland. He began to preach when only sixteen years old, and was hardly twenty when he began to travel. He occupied important appointments in Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania, down to the year 1826, when he died in Baltimore. Among his stations were Washington, Baltimore, and Philadelphia. He was a delegate in three General Conferences. "A man of high intellect,"[19] of kind and generous feelings, of excessive humor in the familiar cirles of his ministerial brethren; "one of the most transparent and ingenuous of men," and of "manly and stirring eloquence." He had a voice of great compass and harmony, and susceptible of such variety of intonation as to express, with the finest effect, every shade of thought he might wish to convey. His language was nervous and chaste. "Taking into account the matter and style of his sermons, together with the manner of delivery, I have," says his friend, Bishop Waugh, "known few more attractive preachers. He appeared to great advantage as a debater in our ecclesiastical judicatories, especially on the floor of an Annual or General Conference. On such occasions he gave fine specimens of forensic eloquence, and often produced a wonderful impression." He was nearly six feet in height, stout and erect, with fair complexion, silky auburn hair, a

[19] Bishop Waugh, in Sprague, p. 373.

round and benevolent face, with a singular difference in the color of his eyes, "one being a soft and beautiful blue, the other so dark a hazel as to become coal-black at night, or when he was excited in conversation or preaching. It had always this shade when you saw him at the distance of the pulpit. In talking or preaching he could hardly speak without being eloquent. He was fond of arguing, and, when animated with a melting or a kindling eye, and the high or low cadences of a good voice, it was a treat to listen. As a preacher he was in marked contrast with the venerable Ryland. While Ryland was, in every tone and gesture, awfully solemn and impressive, Smith, by word and look, was winning and attractive. The one inspired reverence, the other secured love."[20] He had remarkable fervor and pathos in prayer.

By the close of this period the Minutes had ceased to return Church members according to states, but reported them according to Conferences. There were now three of these bodies in the South: Baltimore Conference, with 23,646 members; Virginia, with 17,139; and South Carolina, with 14,510. The aggregate of Southern Methodists was 55,295, of whom more than 14,000 were Africans. The gain for the last eight years had been 15,554, an average of nearly two thousand a year. The South had now nearly one half of all the membership of the Church, including that of Canada. More than a hundred and sixty itinerants were abroad in its Conferences.[21]

[20] Rev. Dr. Sargent, in Sprague, p. 377.

[21] These Conferences included, however, portions of what I have hitherto called the West, that is to say, the regions of Virginia and Pennsylvania west of the mountains. The Western Conference was now organized, and was limited to western states, except a portion of the Holston country.

CHAPTER XIV.

METHODISM IN THE MIDDLE AND NORTHERN STATES: 1796–1804.

Great Religious Interest — Its Excesses — It extends over the Nation — Senator Bassett — Asbury — Ware — Dr. Rush's Interest for Methodism — Dr. Chandler's Services — Solomon Sharp's Character — A Practical Joke — Thomas Smith attempts Suicide — Becomes a Useful Preacher — Curious Facts in his Ministry — A Solemn Wager — Persecution — Restoration of a Decayed Church — Henry Boehm — Boehm's Chapel — Boehm Itinerating in Maryland — The Annals and Airy Families — Singular Introduction of Methodism into Annamessex — Boehm among the Germans of Pennsylvania — Sketch of Jacob Gruber — Peter Vannest — Thomas Burch — The "Albright" Methodists — Dr. Power's German Translation of the Methodist Discipline.

The Church in the Middle States shared largely in the religious interest which we have noticed as prevailing throughout the South in the present period. It was indeed universal, if not simultaneous, from Maine to Tennessee, from Georgia to Canada. Some of our early authorities attribute it to the impulse given by the labors of Wooster in the latter section of the denomination. It seems, however, to have been one of those mysterious "times of refreshing" which appear at intervals in Christian communities, pass through their salutary cycle, and subside, to reappear in due time. Some excesses were incidental, if not unavoidable to the excitement. Watters, as has been observed, was perplexed by them. Enoch George hesitated before them, and used repressive measures at first; but these prudent men, and their brethren generally, seem to have

arrived at the conclusion of Wesley and his colaborers in similar cases, that such proofs of human weakness, or even folly, were not disproofs of the genuineness of the revival; it being natural, if not inevitable, that human infirmity should mingle even with a divine work among fallen men. They saw that the results of the excitement were salutary, that its general character was good, its defects exceptional.

In Baltimore it prevailed mightily. Asbury had written from the South, advising the pastors of the city to open prayer-meetings in private houses wherever possible. Many were now held, and they spread religious influence through many neighborhoods hardly otherwise accessible to the labors of the Church. A great part of the community seemed roused by them to religious inquiry. The quickening spirit extended all through Maryland and Delaware; the chapels and meetings at private houses were crowded in the evenings, and by day the harvest fields, workshops, the forests, where the woodmen were cutting timber, and the homes of the people were vocal with Methodist hymns. It seemed, remarks a witness of the scene, that all the population were turning unto the Lord.[1] In some small villages the societies were recruited by the addition of hundreds of members. On the Baltimore District hosts of souls were converted in 1801, when the excitement had reached its height, and the contemporary historian of the Church[2] shows that, during three or four years more, it spread like fire in stubble through all parts of the country. About the beginning of the century the yellow fever prevailed in the Atlantic cities, and added much to the religious seriousness of the times. The Methodist preachers were steadfast at their

[1] See vol. ii, p. 466.

[2] Lee, 1801–1804.

posts through the period of the pestilence in New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. Some perished by it, but their Churches prospered greatly. George Roberts continued, during its prevalence in Baltimore, to preach regularly, "while hundreds were falling its victims on his right hand and his left." Light-street Church was crowded continually with more than two thousand hearers. "More or less," he says, "are hopefully converted every week. In Philadelphia, it is said, there is a very great revival of religion, and near one hundred have been added to the society in two weeks." Senator Bassett wrote to Asbury from Dover, Del., in 1801: "Glory to God, he has done wonders! About one hundred and thirteen, white and black, were joined in society yesterday, and, from what I hear, I doubt not but as many, if not twice the number, who went away wounded and crippled, sick and sore, will be joined in different parts of the country; all the fruits of this blessed meeting."

Bassett was practically a lay evangelist among his neighbors. He held at Dover a sort of annual protracted meeting, with daily preaching and prayer-meetings at sunrise, for a whole week. "O the wonders of redeeming love!" he writes in 1802; "without controversy great is the mystery of godliness. I conceive I am within bounds when I say the congregations this day, had they been numbered, were seven thousand souls. I say congregations, for such was the multitude, it was found necessary to have three preachers engaged at the same time, the congregations at a proper distance from each other; and this was not enough, a fourth congregation might have been found. Surely the scene was awful; a time to be remembered, and a day of great solemnity. The power of God was great

among saints and sinners. We had also a glorious day and night both in the house of God, and my own house; several were powerfully awakened, at private houses, in times of singing and prayer. On Monday sinners began to be greatly alarmed and powerfully agitated in mind. On Tuesday, after preaching, the sacrament was administered. This was the most gracious, solemn, and rejoicing time I ever saw. I conclude there were not less than between twelve and fifteen hundred who came to the Lord's table, white and colored people. In this exercise many sinners were cut to the heart, and powerful convictions took place, most of which I believe ended in sound conversions, and many backsliders were reclaimed. O the astonishing goodness of the all-wonder-working God! I presume there were not less than from twenty to thirty souls converted or sanctified in my own house during the meeting. Blessed be God for it. I know you will say in your heart, Amen. The two last days our meeting was the best, and so it was at the last yearly meeting. Our blessed God, in both instances, kept the best wine to the last. We continued till three o'clock on Friday morning. It gave me some grief that we did not hold out longer, because I saw such an uncommon thirst in the hearts of the people of God. There must have been some hundreds awakened."

Wilson Lee writes, in 1803: "The work in the city (Baltimore) and circuits has been moving on in power. In the federal city and Georgetown a goodly number have joined society. In Prince George and Calvert Circuits seven hundred and seventy-two joined in the first six months after Conference, and, from the information I received, in two rounds afterward upward of one thousand joined. In other places the work has been going forward without any visible declension."

Similar reports were made, from all parts of the Church, down to 1805, and so extraordinary was this almost universal revival, that it was deemed expedient to put upon record some account of it, by the publication of several letters of preachers and laymen, to Asbury, describing its scenes in various parts of the country.[3]

Asbury made no less than twelve passages over the Middle States in these years, going to and returning from the East; but, as usual in this mature portion of the Church, his notes are too meager to afford any historical information or interest.

Thomas Ware, whom we have met in so many widely apart sections, was sent at the beginning of this period to the Philadelphia District, which extended from Wilmington, Del., to the Seneca Lake, N. Y. "A glorious religious excitement," he writes, "commenced on Strasburgh and Chester Circuits, which spread through the whole peninsula, exceeding anything I have ever witnessed. This revival embraced all classes, governor, judges, lawyers, and statesmen, old and young, rich and poor, including many of the African race, who adorned their profession by a well-ordered life, and some of them by a triumphant death. For Strasburgh Circuit I felt a particular interest, as it had now become the place of my residence. Many of the children of the early Methodists were nearly grown up, and but few of them professed religion, and some who had long prayed for a revival had become almost discouraged. Such was the state of things on this circuit when I prevailed

[3] This volume was entitled "Extracts of Letters, containing some Account of the Work of God since the Year 1800, etc. New York, 1805." An edition was printed also at Bernard, Vt., in 1812. It has long been out of print. My citations are from it.

on Bishop Asbury to appoint Dr. Chandler to it, as the most likely, in my estimation, to be useful in stirring up the people. Dr. Chandler, at the time I obtained his consent to travel, was reading medicine with Dr. Rush. He had been for some time a licensed preacher. He was gifted, enterprising, and every way well qualified for the itinerant work; and in that capacity I thought he would be most likely to be useful. I had a very particular friendship for him, as I had long known him and his habits, which I believed were such as would render him eminently successful in the work of saving souls, if he would give himself up wholly to the service of the Church. I accordingly communicated with him on the subject, but he pleaded his engagements with Dr. Rush as a barrier against his going out into the field. I accordingly waited on the venerable Rush, and expressed to him my views respecting the duty of Chandler, who perfectly agreed with me in the matter, and cheerfully released him from his engagements, and he entered with all his soul into the work."

Rush was himself a Methodist in spirit, if not in name. He educated in medicine several Methodist preachers who were compelled to locate by the growth of their families. He entertained at his house many of them during the sessions of the Conferences, addressed the Philadelphia Conference in behalf of "temperance," heard with admiration the more celebrated itinerants, read with delight the writings of Wesley and Fletcher, and contemplated with devout interest the prospects of Methodism in the new world.[4] He readily, therefore,

[4] Rev. Joshua Marsden, a distinguished Wesleyan preacher, who was in the United States in 1814, says: "One of his pupils related to me a singular anecdote respecting him. He was at one time attending his lectures, and remarked that in one of them he branched out upon a subject, which he, Dr. Sargent, had read, more largely treated upon in

spared Chandler for the itinerancy. "At the commencement of the second quarter," continues Ware, "Dr. Chandler began covenanting with the people. He obtained a pledge from them to abstain wholly from the use of ardent spirits, and to meet him at the throne of grace three times a day, namely, at sunrise, at noon, and at the going down of the sun, to pray for a revival of the work of God on the circuit, and especially that he would visit them and give them some token for good at their next quarterly meeting. As the time of the meeting approached he pressed them to come out without fail, and expressed a belief that the Lord would do great things for us. Soon after he commenced this course there were evident indications that the work was beginning to revive, and many, with the preacher, began to predict that something great would be done at the

a work of Mr. Fletcher's, and, meeting with Dr. Rush afterward, my friend asked him if he knew the writings of Mr. Fletcher. 'Ah, yes,' replied the doctor, 'I know the writings of that great and good man well, and can assure you he was the first that knocked the shackles of absolute unconditional predestination from my mind. Before I read his works I could not pray for all men; but he set me at liberty; and if I meet him in heaven, I will thank him, and say, You, Mr. Fletcher, gave me just views of God's love to the human family.' This anecdote may be depended upon as an absolute fact."—Marsden's Narrative of a Mission, etc., p. 319. London, 1827. Drs. Rush and Physic, the two most eminent members of the Philadelphia faculty of that day, were physicians general to the itinerants of the Middle States. Asbury often mentions them. He says, (May 1, 1811,) "Drs. Rush and Physic paid me a visit. How consoling it is to know that these great characters are men fearing God! I was much gratified, as I ever am, by their attentions, kindness, and charming conversation; indeed they have been of eminent use to me, and I acknowledge their services with gratitude." Bochm (p. 343) says: "It was at this interview, as they were separating, the bishop inquired what he should pay for their professional services. They answered, 'Nothing; only an interest in your prayers.' Said Bishop Asbury, 'As I do not like to be in debt, we will pray now;' and he knelt down and offered a most impressive prayer that God would bless and reward them for their kindness to him."

quarterly meeting. On Saturday many people attended. I opened the meeting by singing, and then attempted to pray; but in two minutes my voice was drowned in the general cry throughout the house, which continued all that day and night, and indeed for the greater part of three days. A great number professed to be converted, who stood fast and adorned their profession; but the best of all was, many who had lost their first love repented, and did their first works, and God restored them to his favor. Cecil Circuit had been added to the Philadelphia District. The quarterly meeting on this circuit was at hand, and I urged Dr. C. to attend it. He came with a number of the warmhearted members from his circuit. Some twenty or thirty professed to receive an evidence of the remission of their sins, and united with the Church. From this the fire began to spread to the South, and soon the whole peninsula was in a flame of revival. At the North also the influence was felt. Sparks were kindled in Middletown, Northumberland, Wilkesbarre, and quite up in the Genesee and Lake country in Western New York. In 1800 I was appointed to a district on the peninsula. There were in this district ten circuits, twenty traveling preachers, and about nine thousand members. This I deemed one of the most important charges I ever filled. The scenes which I witnessed at Smyrna, Dover, Milford, Centerville, Easton, and many other places, I have not ability to describe. During the times of revival in these places thousands of all ranks were drawn to the meetings, and spent days together in acts of devotion, apparently forgetful of their temporal concerns. In this way the work continued to extend until it became general. Here, as in Tennessee, I hesitated not to call at any house when I wanted refreshment or a night's en-

tertainment. The candle of the Lord shone brilliantly about my path, and my cup was oftentimes full to overflowing."

At a Conference held this year at Smyrna, Del., he says, "there were persons present from almost all parts of the Eastern Shore, who witnessed the general excitement and gracious influence from the beginning to the end of the Conference, during which time hundreds were converted to God. These returned home, revived in their spirits, and wondering at what they had seen, and heard, and felt; and through the instrumentality of some of these the fires of revival were kindled up in their neighborhoods before the preachers arrived. At the close of this Conference one hundred persons were received on trial in the Church." Ware had charge of Bassett's protracted meeting, and "there were few of the principal houses in Dover in which there were not some converted during it; and more than once the whole night was employed, both in the church and private houses, in prayer for penitents, and in rejoicing with those who had obtained an evidence of pardon, or were reclaimed from their backslidings." So profound was the interest all over his district, that he says we knew not what to do with the thousands who attended the quarterly meetings. "Sometimes we were forced to resort to the woods, and even to hold our love-feasts in the grove. Our membership increased rapidly." He spent the remainder of the period in arduous labors on the Philadelphia and Jersey Districts.

Dr. Chandler, whom he had recalled to the itinerancy, became one of its most influential members. He was born in Maryland in 1764, converted at St. George's Church, Philadelphia, in 1790, joined the Conference in 1797, traveled several circuits in the Middle States with

success, and was preparing to locate as a physician, when Ware's influence and Rush's counsels brought him again into active labors. He was eminently useful and popular on districts and in Philadelphia down to 1813, when he located, irrecoverably broken down in health. In 1822 his name was replaced upon the Conference roll, that he might die a member of the body, though unable to perform active service. He had preached as he had strength till 1820, when he was struck with paralysis in the pulpit of Ebenezer Church, Philadelphia. He went to the West Indies for relief, but suffered there a second attack, and hastened home to die. As usual with this malady, his mind shared the debility of his body, and for some time he was painfully troubled with doubts regarding his Christian experience and prospects; but a few days before his death the clouds dispersed, and left his last hours radiant as with an excess of light. On a Sunday morning he said to his class-leader, "Go to the meeting and tell them I am dying, shouting the praises of God!" His physician wrote that his disease was an almost universal paralysis, and "although his body was fast sinking, his mind, for two days, was restored to perfect vigor and correctness. During this time he seemed to be in the borders of the heavenly inheritance. He spoke of the glories, the joys, and the inhabitants of heaven as though he had been in the midst of them. He remarked to me at the time, that he felt that his soul had begun to dissolve its connection with the body; and that there was a freedom, a clearness and ease in its views and operations that was entirely new to him, of which he had never before formed a conception. "In fact," said he, "I know not whether I am in the body or out of it." Soon after this he sunk into a stupor, in which he remained to the

last. His brethren of the Conference pronounce him a man of no ordinary grade. "In his deportment, dignity and humility, fervor and gentleness, plainness and brotherly kindness, with uniform piety, were strikingly exemplified. In the pulpit his soul was in his eloquence, his Saviour was his theme, and the divine unction that rested upon him, and the evangelical energy of his sermons, gave a success to his labors that has been exceeded by few." In stature he was of medium height, his countenance was "fine and expressive," his manners bland and polished, but without affectation; his intellect much above mediocrity, and his preaching often of an enrapturing eloquence.

Solomon Sharp, whose name is still familiar throughout the Churches of the Middle States, was one of the conspicuous itinerants of these times, traveling important circuits in Delaware, large districts in New Jersey, and closing the period in Philadelphia. He was a native of the Eastern Shore of Maryland, where his parents had been pioneer Methodists. In 1791, when about twenty years old, he began to travel, "under the presiding elder;" the next year he was admitted to the Conference, and continued in the service, occupying almost all important appointments in New Jersey, Eastern Pennsylvania, and Delaware, down to 1835, when he was reported superannuated. The next year he died at Smyrna, Del. His last sermon, preached a short time previously, was on the text, "There remaineth, therefore, a rest for the people of God." After closing the discourse, in which he had treated with much interest of the final rest of saints, he was heard to exclaim, "Now I feel that my work is done!" He was found dead in his bed. The Minutes testify that, "as a Christian he was irreproachable,

and as a preacher his talents were of an extraordinary character."

Solomon Sharp was an original, an eccentric, but a mighty man. His sermons were powerful, and delivered with a singular tone of authority, as if he were conscious of his divine commission. His form was tall, remarkably robust, and in his latter years he was one of the most noticeable and patriarchal figures in the Conference, with long white locks flowing upon his shoulders, and a bearing of no little dignity. He was subject to variations of mind, which bordered on hypochondria, being at times one of the most vivacious and entertaining of talkers, full of anecdotes and apposite remarks; at others totally reticent, if not sombre, in whatever company. His voice was powerful, and he sometimes used it to its utmost capacity, especially at camp-meetings; "but," says one of his friends, "there was nothing in his manner that savoured of extravagance." He was noted for his courage, and it is supposed that he was hardly capable of feeling fear. He had occasion sometimes, at camp-meetings and elsewhere, to show this quality. No opponent challenged it a second time. In his old age a company of reckless young men attempted to play a "practical joke" upon him, by sending for him to come to their work-shop, under pretence that one of their number was in great distress of conscience, and was desirous that he should converse and pray with him. Prompt to obey every call of duty, and especially such a call as this, he hastened to the place, where he found a person apparently in such a state of mind as had been represented. He listened with close attention to the sad recital, and was about to proceed to give the appropriate instruction, when something in the appearance of one or more of the men who were standing

around, awakened his suspicion that all was not right; and presently the whole company, not excepting the poor creature who had consented to be the subject of the impious farce, were exhibiting a broad grin at their imagined triumph. But the old hero was not at all at a loss how to meet such an emergency. He instantly closed the door and stood with his back against it; and, as there was no other way by which they could make their escape, they were obliged to listen, while he placed their characters and conduct in a light that was entirely new to them. He dwelt upon their meanness as well as their wickedness. He called them heaven-daring, heaven-provoking, hell-deserving sinners. He wrought himself up into a perfect storm of indignation, while he denounced upon them the threatenings of God, and brought vividly before them the terrors of the judgment. The infidel sneer and laugh soon gave place to the deepest concern; and it was not long before they actually trembled, like Belshazzar, when he saw the hand-writing on the wall. And now they began to cry for mercy. "Down on your knees, down on your knees," said the veteran; and they actually fell upon their knees, praying, and begging the good old man to pray for them. He did pray for them, and some of them dated the beginning of a religious life from that period.[5]

Thomas Smith, whom we have met in Virginia, was an effective laborer in the revival scenes of this period in the Middle States.[6] He was converted in early life, and almost in the act of committing suicide. "I had caught up the rope," he says, "and had taken hold

[5] Sprague, p. 217.

[6] Experience and Ministerial Labors of Rev. Thomas Smith, etc. Edited by Rev. David Daily: New York, 1848.

of the ladder, and put my foot on a round of it, when the thought rushed into my mind, 'It is an awful thing to die, you had better pray first!'" He dropped the rope at the foot of the ladder, fell on his knees, and continued praying till his disturbed mind was restored, and his troubled conscience found peace with God. In his eighteenth year he began to preach. In his twenty-second year (1798) he was received into the Philadelphia Conference. Throughout our present period he preached in Delaware and New Jersey with great power; the demonstrations which had attended Abbott's labors were repeated at almost all his appointments, and hundreds of souls were gathered into the societies. He and his colleague, Anning Owen, the itinerant hero of Wyoming, suffered no little maltreatment. While on Flanders Circuit, "I went," he says, "to a place called Dover, where there was a noted iron factory, owned by a few gentlemen, who neither feared God nor regarded man. In their employment were several hundred men, mostly foreigners, and they of the baser sort. Having been invited by a gentleman to preach in his house, I rode up to his door at the time appointed. The gentleman met me, expressing his sorrow at seeing me, saying that my coming to the place to preach had given such offense to his neighbors that he believed, did I attempt to preach, they would pull down the house and mob the people. While I yet sat on my horse I was surrounded by ruffians, for such they looked to be, and such they were. They informed me that I was not to preach there that night. 'So I perceive, gentlemen,' said I: 'this makes seven times that I have come to you in the name of my Master and your Judge, in a peaceful manner, and with a peaceful gospel, and seven times you have prevented me, save one. I

am now clear of your blood, and you shall see my face no more until we stand at the judgment-seat of Christ. Three months ago you mobbed my colleague, Mr. Owen, a man upward of seventy years of age, for attempting to preach Jesus Christ to perishing sinners. You designed to kill him; but failing in that, you drummed him out of your town, court-martialed him on the road, made a halter to hang him, and treated him most shamefully and cruelly, disfiguring the horse on which he rode; then you drew his likeness on a board, and set it up at auction, and sold the Lord's servant for twenty-five cents, who came seeking your salvation, desiring to rescue you out of the snare of the devil."

This hostility was chiefly, as he says, from foreigners, Romanists. Methodism subsequently made its way into the town, and the citizens erected a chapel for it Elsewhere on their rugged circuit the two itinerants were thoroughly compensated for such trials by the affectionate attentions of the people, and, as they made their last round, the leave-takings were heart-breaking; the people hung around them, sobbing aloud. Though preaching with the utmost energy, Smith was remarkable for the shortness of his sermons, seldom exceeding twenty minutes. In these primitive times, when the congregations gathered from great distances, they demanded longer entertainment; and, strange as it may seem in our day, would sometimes remonstrate against his brevity. He never, however, would consent to prolong a single sermon, but sometimes would despatch one, and, announcing a second text, discuss another subject, and formally concluding it, add even a third text and discourse. His introductory devotions had surpassing power, and such was his faith in prayer, that he sometimes

ventured to extraordinary unwarrantable risks in its use. An example occurred on his Flanders Circuit, which, if it did not fully justify his prudence, yet showed the wonderful, not to say irresistible, unction and force of his supplications. At a quarterly meeting at Pemberton, "Sylvester Hutchinson," he says, "preached, and mighty power from on high came among the people. I saw a young man sallying around in the crowd, and, coming to the left of the pulpit, I made my way to him, and inquired into the state of his mind. He told me he was in great distress on account of his sins. While conversing with him, three gentlemen came up, and insisted on his going away. I asked them if they were his guardians. They told me 'No.' I desired them to be quiet until I was done talking with him. They remarked that there was no necessity for talking with the young man on the subject of religion. 'Perhaps, gentlemen,' said I, 'you don't believe in the Christian religion?' They said, 'No; we do not.' I said, 'Gentlemen, will you suffer us to gather around you, and pray for you thirty minutes? After which, if there be no change in your minds on the subject of the Christian religion, I will agree to give it up myself.' They replied, 'Well, sir, we will take you up on your own proposal. You shall pray for us thirty minutes, and we will stand our ground until the thirty minutes shall have expired, and if any change be wrought in our minds by any supernatural power, we will, as honest men, confess it; but if there be no change in our minds as to the truth of the Christian religion, you shall, on your part, renounce it before this congregation.' My answer was, 'Gentlemen, I will most solemnly do so. Then it is a bargain. Amen.' I then called the attention of the congregation to this awful contract. Many

faces turned pale, others trembled with fear lest I should be a ruined man from that night forever. I requested our friends to give up the whole block of seats next to the pulpit. 'Infidelity and Christianity are fairly at issue, and may the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, answer by fire!' I then called on all the official members of the church, and all who could pray in faith, to come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty. In one minute there were scores around us. But before we kneeled I delivered them a charge, and that was, 'Brethren, you are not to offer one prayer for the conversion of these gentlemen. If you do, that prayer will be lost; but send your petitions to the throne of grace, that God may convict them of the error of their way, as he did Saul of Tarsus on his way to Damascus.' This being understood, I cried, 'Let us pray.' At that moment I reckon there were twenty watches drawn from the pocket to mark the time. If I ever saw a time of prayer it was that night. The whole congregation were as one mouth and one breath. The foundations of the house seemed to tremble. I held my watch, and proclaimed the time. 'Five minutes of the time are gone! Ten minutes of the time are gone! Fifteen minutes of the time are gone!' and down came a Saul of Tarsus to the floor. And was there not a shout? It was like the tumbling down of the walls of Jericho. 'Twenty minutes of the time are gone!' and down came the second. 'Twenty-five minutes of the time are gone!' and the third gentleman took his seat. After the time allotted for prayer had expired, two gentlemen on the floor, and the third seated, I requested the congregation to be seated, and to be quiet, for the spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets. I then called on these three gentlemen to tell the congregation if

any change had taken place in their minds, and whether they then believed in the Christian religion. So many of them as could stand arose, and most solemnly declared that their minds had changed, and that they then believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. Christianity did at that time triumph over infidelity. To God be the glory!"

The itinerant's faith was admirable in its earnestness, and sublime in its power, but it went beyond his theology; he seemed not to remember that his Church believes in the freedom of the will, and the power of man to resist utterly religious convictions. He imprudently hazarded much, but his triumph was complete.

His courage was unshakable, and he needed it all in his many encounters with persecutors. On one of his circuits, in 1801, Ware was with him, preaching with overwhelming effect, while a band of young men waited at the door with bludgeons to attack Smith. When the meeting closed he boldly advanced through them, brushing their clothes, and seeing their clubs, but every arm hung down helpless. The next day he was fearlessly preaching among them in the open air to three thousand African slaves. A few days afterward he was "waylaid by four of his opposers, who had bound themselves under an oath to spill his blood that day." He appealed to God: "I will put my trust in thee;" and rode bravely past them, hearing them curse one another behind him, with mutual accusations of cowardice. Nothing could deter him. "The work of the Lord," he wrote, "has been going on day and night for six months past, and Christ's kingdom is coming. On this circuit we have no rest week. A pity we should, while souls are perishing for lack of knowledge. Let us be up and at our posts. We generally preach twice

a day, meet two classes, and get up a prayer-meeting somewhere in the afternoon, if we can. Our work on this circuit is never done; we rest, and at it again."

In 1802 he traveled Dover Circuit with Chandler, and had his usual success. In the first five weeks two hundred and forty converts were received on probation. Methodism seldom experienced even local declension in these energetic times, but there was one memorable place on his circuit—"Blackiston's Meeting-house"—a building planned by Asbury himself, where, after years of prosperity, the congregation had so much dwindled that the Sunday preaching was given up, and it had become a week-day appointment with a small class. To Smith such a fact was inadmissible in Methodism. He obtained a supply for one of his Sunday appointments, and resolved to spend the entire day with the decayed Church. "I held," he says, "a love-feast at eight o'clock, and many attended from neighboring classes. When it was near the time to close the love-feast I looked out at the pulpit window, and saw about three hundred people in the yard of the meeting-house, scores of whom were bathed in tears, smiting their breasts, and crying for mercy. I made this known to the friends, and advised them to open the doors and windows forthwith, and let the people come in. They did so. The people without rushed into the house, and there was one tremendous rush of God's power upon them. They fell before it in all directions, and the vast multitude lay on the floor like men slain in battle. There was no preaching until three o'clock in the afternoon The people were coming and going to and from this meeting, night and day, until Tuesday at ten o'clock. There were several sermons preached in the time, but the meeting was carried on principally by

prayer and exhortation. On Monday afternoon we gave an opportunity for all who had been converted at the meeting, to come forward and give in their names, when eighty-five came up to the altar, and were all received on probation in the Church." On Monday, about night, he attempted to break up the assembly, and left the house; but the people made a halt in the yard, and began to sing. The full moon was shining. Smith stood on a grave, and preached on the words, "At midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh!" "After closing the sermon we got back," he says, "into the meeting-house as well as we could, for such a time of God's power I never saw in this world before, and we then held on until ten o'clock on Tuesday morning. The Lord began this meeting, the Lord carried it on, and the Lord finished it; yea, this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes." This occasion produced a general revival; a large society and congregation were formed at Blackiston's Meeting-house, where Sunday preaching was permanently restored.

Such was Thomas Smith throughout these and many subsequent years, a man who preached with the utmost brevity, but with the utmost power. He had great physical vigor, was stout to corpulence, below the ordinary height, erect and authoritative in mien, fastidiously neat in dress, exceedingly sociable among his intimate friends, and preached always with intense excitement, moving through his twenty-minute discourse like a war-steed in a charge.

Henry Boehm began his long itinerant career in our present period. We have repeatedly alluded to the old homestead of his venerable father, Martin Boehm, who, expelled from the "Mennonites" for his "too evan-

gelical opinions," became a bishop among the "United Brethren," or "German Methodists," a people founded, as we have seen, by the labors of Asbury's friend, Otterbein.[11] He lived and died a patriarch of Methodism in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. His home at Conestoga is consecrated in the early Methodist records as the frequent shelter of Asbury, Whatcoat, and most of the Methodist leaders. We have noticed the achievements of Abbott in "Boehm's Chapel," and all through its neighborhood. Henry Boehm, born in the homestead in 1775, was trained up under the best influences of Methodism and the benedictions of its best evangelists. "Morning and evening," he says, "the old family Bible was read, and prayer was offered. My father's voice still echoes in my ears. My mother, too, had much to do in moulding my character and shaping my destiny. One evening as I returned home I heard a familiar voice engaged in prayer. I listened: it was my mother. Among other things, she prayed for her children, and mentioned Henry, her youngest son. The mention of my name broke my heart, and melted me into contrition. Tears rolled down my cheeks, and I felt the importance of complying with the command of God: 'My son, give me thine heart.'"[12]

He was converted in 1793, through the instrumentality of Chandler, but concealed the fact for five years. "These," he writes, "were lost years; lost to myself, lost to the Church, and lost to the world. There is nothing in my early history I regret so much as the loss of these five years; a loss that tears and prayers cannot recall, for time once lost is gone forever."

[11] Lee, vol. i, p. 216.

[12] Reminiscences, Historical and Biographical, etc., by Rev. Henry Boehm. Edited by Rev. J. B. Wakeley, p. 18. New York, 1865.

He heard Strawbridge and Abbott, and most of the itinerant "sons of thunder," at Boehm's Chapel. This famous structure was planned by Whatcoat, and built, in 1791, of limestone, on a hill which commands a magnificent view of the surrounding country. "There were wonderful gatherings," he says, "at Boehm's Chapel. The bishops and the great men of Methodism found their way there, and preached the word. At Quarterly meetings the people came from Philadelphia and the Eastern Shore of Maryland and the Western Shore from Watters's neighborhood. Boehm's Chapel was a great center of influence. It is difficult now to estimate the position it once occupied in Methodism. My father was 'given to hospitality,' and at great meetings fifty and even one hundred have been entertained at his house. Several itinerant ministers were raised up and went out from the neighborhood of the Chapel to preach the gospel. Ten I now think of, and there may be others: Joseph Jewell, Simon Miller, Richard Sneath, William and James Hunter, James and William Mitchell, Thomas and Robert Burch, and Henry Boehm. David Best and James Aiken were from the circuit. It is singular that they were all from Ireland except Jewell, Miller, and myself." In this noted temple Henry Boehm openly took upon him the vows of religion in 1798, and was received into the Church by Thomas Ware. He was soon appointed class-leader, began to exhort, and at last to preach. He was a spectator at the General Conference of 1800, and was inspired by its extraordinary scenes for the mission of his life. Thence he went with Chandler, M'Combs, Bostwick, and others to the Philadelphia Conference at Smyrna, where he witnessed still more stirring scenes than at Baltimore; the session was held at a private house, that the chapel

might be continually used for public worship. Love-feasts, preaching, prayer-meetings, beginning at sunrise, were held daily, and throughout almost the entire nights; the people crowded in from all the neighboring regions, and a hundred and fifty souls were converted before the adjournment of the Conference. "There were great revivalists at this Conference," continues Boehm: "W. P. Chandler, John Chalmers, Jesse Lee, each a host in himself, and many others, who entered heartily into the work. It was not confined to them; the preachers and people all had a mind to work. This Conference will ever be memorable as the most fruitful in saving souls of any ever held in America. Those who were not present can form but a faint idea of the nature of the work. Meetings were held day and night, with rarely any intermission. One meeting in the church continued forty-five hours without cessation. Many were converted in private houses and at family prayer, as well as in the house of the Lord. This revival did immense good; the preachers returned to their work like flames of fire. For several nights I did not take off my clothes, but lay down upon the sofa and rested a little while, and then was up and right into the thickest of the battle." He walked back to Lancaster, sixty miles, "having seen more, heard more, enjoyed more, since he left home, than in all his lifetime before."

In this year Thomas Ware called him out to travel Dorchester Circuit, Md., famous as the region into which Catharine Ennalls had introduced Methodism, and where Garrettson suffered his most memorable persecutions and imprisonment.[13] Henry Ennalls and his family were yet the chief supporters of the Church on this circuit, and his wife now saved Boehm, for though

[13] See vol. i, p. 369.

he could readily preach in German, his public use of the English language was difficult and embarrassing, and he began to despond and think of returning home when she, who "was one of the best of women, gave me," he says, "such a reproof as I shall never forget. 'My young brother,' she said, 'your eternal salvation may depend upon the course you are about to take. You may lose your soul by such an unwise, hasty step.' Then she exhorted me in the most earnest and emphatic manner not to abandon my work, but to keep on. I resolved in the strength of my Master to try again, and though over threescore years have gone into eternity since, 'having obtained help from God, I continue unto this day.' Well I remember that hospitable mansion; and the room in which we were, the attitude of the woman, her anxious countenance, her piercing eye, the tone of her voice, are all before me just as if it were yesterday. Her wise counsel has had an influence upon me all my days; it shaped my destiny for life. She has been in the grave many years, and I remember her still with a heart overflowing with gratitude." Airy, who had befriended Garrettson, was dead, but his widow still lived, a faithful witness for the truth, keeping open doors for the preachers. He visited her, and "in family prayer," he says, "we had a gracious time. The Holy Ghost descended in copious effusions, and the widow was so baptized that she shouted aloud for joy, and was greatly strengthened and encouraged. I retired to my couch feeling that my soul was resting in God. I preached at Ennalls's meeting-house. There was a class at Harry Ennalls's: on the book were the names of Harry Ennalls, leader; Sarah, his wife; and Eliza Airey, the widow of Squire Airey. There were other honorable names that I have not space to transcribe—they

are in the book of life. There were two colored classes that met at Ennalls's: one had twenty members, the other twenty-five. We preached also at Airey's Chapel. This was not far from where Squire Airey lived and died, and it was called after him; there was a class or society here; there were forty-four names belonging to one class." Ennalls's and Airey's chapels were now important preaching places of the circuit.

His next circuit was Annamessex, where he labored with William Colbert. It has a singular history. An itinerant on his way to Accomac, beyond the line, in Virginia, inquired for his route, and was cruelly directed in a course that led him into Cypress Swamp, which extended many miles; plunging into it, he discovered that he had been deceived; but after wandering about in the mud, bogs, and water, in danger of sinking and perishing, he came out near the house of Jepthah Bowen, on the east side of the Pocomoke River. Bowen gave him a hearty welcome. The preacher prayed with so much effect in the family that he was invited to preach at the house. He did so, and the people were so pleased with his sermon that Bowen's house became a regular preaching place. Thus Methodism was providentially introduced into that region of the country. Jepthah Bowen and many of his neighbors were converted, and a society was early formed at his house. He lived long enough to see the frame of a new chapel erected, which bore his name. "This led to the formation of several societies in that region, and to the conversion of multitudes. His children and children's children were blessed, being the descendants of those who entertained the Lord's prophets."

Boehm's circuit was nearly two hundred miles round. "We preached," he says, "against slavery, and per-

suaded our brethren and those who were converted to liberate their slaves, and we were often successful. There was a revival both among the white and colored people. We preached at Snow Hill. It was formerly a wretched place, where the traffic in negroes was carried on. The Georgia traders in human flesh came there and bought slaves, and then took them south and sold them. Methodism made a mighty change there and destroyed this inhuman traffic. Indeed the whole circuit had a wall of fire around it and a glory in the midst. In every appointment sinners were converted. The Peninsula seemed like a garden of God. Scenes took place that gladdened the eyes of angels and thrilled the heart of the Saviour. The Gospel had wonderful power, and the results were glorious, as the records of eternity will reveal." He subsequently labored on Kent, Bristol, and Dauphin Circuits. The latter was large, and mostly among a German population, to whom he and Jacob Gruber preached, in their vernacular, at twenty out of thirty appointments.

Asbury took up Boehm on the Bristol Circuit to accompany him to the West. "We went," says Boehm, "over the Dry Ridge and the Alleghany Hills singing the praises of the Most High. We stopped in Berlin, Somerset County, on the top of the mountains. I preached in German, and the bishop exhorted. Here, on the top of the Alleghany Mountains, I parted with the bishop, having been with him fourteen days, and heard him preach eight times. He always loved the Germans, and as I could preach in that language, and few at that time could, he said to me, 'Henry, you had better return and preach to the Germans, and I will pursue my journey alone.' He did not send me back to Bristol, but to Dauphin, there being more Germans

on that circuit. The bishop gave me his blessing, and with tears I bade him adieu, and he turned his face westward and I went eastward." Thus went the itinerants of those days; triumphing wherever they went. He introduced Methodism into Reading and Harrisburgh, not without much opposition. At the former, he says, "there was a shop in the neighborhood of the school-house, where some men used to meet together. One of the company, a young man, undertook to mimic the Methodists. He went on to show how they acted in their meetings. He shouted, clapped his hands, and then he would show how they fell down: (The Methodists in that day would sometimes fall and lose their strength.) He then threw himself down on the floor, and lay there as if asleep. His companions enjoyed the sport; but after he had lain for some time they wondered why he did not get up. They shook him in order to awake him. When they saw he did not breathe they turned pale, and sent for a physician, who examined the man and pronounced him dead. This awful incident did two things for us: it stopped ridicule and persecution; it also gave us favor in the sight of the people. They believed that God was for us. Little do the present Methodists of Reading know of our early struggles and difficulties. Now they have two churches, Ebenezer and St. Paul's, and Reading is the head of a district, which is not larger than my circuit in 1803." When James Smith, his presiding elder, came to the circuit, Boehm had to translate his discourses into German. Many of the people had never heard an English sermon. "German," he says, "was the pioneer language, and prepared the way for the English. I could have accomplished but little there if I had not been able to preach in German." Boehm and Gruber were thus successfully

bearing the standard of Methodism into the German regions of Pennsylvania before the close of our present period. The former was to survive till our day; his personal life has been woven into our whole subsequent Church history, and we shall often have occasion to repeat his venerated name. "I saw," he writes, "the birth of our nation, and have lived under the first President, George Washington, and sixteen of his successors, to Andrew Johnson. I was born nine years before the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized, and have known all its bishops, from Thomas Coke, the first, to Calvin Kingsley, the last elected. My memory goes back over eighty years. I recollect when they traveled out West to Fort Pitt, now Pittsburgh, on 'pack horses.' The roads, if we may call them roads, for they were mere paths through the wilderness, were so rough that they could not be traveled any other way. I knew many of the fathers in the Methodist ministry, and have lived not only to bury the fathers, but many of their sons."

Jacob Gruber was one of the unique "characters" of these times. Many of us still recall him: his prim clerical costume, his white locks sleekly combed behind his ears, his German accent, his glowing, genial face, with its quizzical play of humor and sarcasm that at once attracted, and held on anxious guard, the interlocutor, his unrivaled power of quaint and apposite illustration, his aptness and humor in telling a story, his tireless readiness for labor, and his staunch tenacity for everything Methodistic. His colleague, Boehm, says he was at this time a fine intelligent looking man, and his countenance often expressed a thing before his tongue uttered it. "He had a German face and a German tongue, and often looked quizzical. He wore a drab

hat, and a suit of gray cut in Quaker style. With a rough exterior, but a kind heart, it was necessary to know him in order to appreciate him. A more honest man never lived, a bolder soldier of the cross never wielded 'the sword of the Spirit.' As a preacher he was original and eccentric. His powers of irony, sarcasm, and ridicule were tremendous, and woe to the poor fellow who got into his hands; he would wish himself somewhere else. I heard him preach scores of times, and always admired him; not only for his originality, but at all times there was a marvelous unction attending his word."

He was born in Bucks County, Pa., in 1778, and became a Methodist before he was fifteen years old. He was driven by his father from his home on account of his new faith; they were reconciled, and he was received again under the parental roof, but his zealous labors for the religious welfare of his neighbors produced such excitement as to lead to his second and final expulsion. He took his leave, with his clothes in a knapsack on his back, and wended his way on foot toward Lancaster, not knowing what should befall him. But on the route a Methodist preacher on horseback accosted him; a few minutes conversation sufficed to make known his forlorn case to the itinerant, who exhorted him to go out forthwith and preach the gospel, recommending him to a vacancy on a circuit. No advice could better suit Gruber's feelings at the moment. He immediately spent all his little means in purchasing a horse, and mounting him was away for the circuit. Thus commenced, in about his twenty-second year, his long and never-slackened itinerant career of more than half a century, during the whole of which, it has been affirmed as "a remarkable fact," that there was

not a gap or intermission of four consecutive weeks for any cause whatever.[14] His appointments extended from New Jersey through Pennsylvania to the Greenbrier Mountains of Western Virginia, from the interior Lake regions of New York to the shores of the Chesapeake. He was presiding elder eleven years, was on circuits thirty-two, and during seven filled important stations in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington. He died an honored veteran of more than seventy-two years, and in a manner befitting his career. On being informed that he could not live through another night, "Then," he replied, "to-morrow I shall spend my first Sabbath in heaven! Last Sabbath in the Church on earth—next Sabbath in the Church above!" and with evident emotion added, "Where congregations ne'er break up, and Sabbaths never end!" He requested a fellow-laborer to collect a few brethren and sisters around him, "to see me safe off," (to use his own words,) "and while I am going sing, 'On Jordan's stormy banks I stand.'" They were gathered, and sung while his spirit calmly took its flight.

It has been affirmed that he performed more work, preached more sermons, endured more fatigue and hardship, with less abatement of mental and physical energy, than perhaps any other minister of his times. Like most of the primitive Methodist preachers, he was a courageous opponent of slavery, and hesitated not to preach against it. We shall hereafter see him arraigned before a court of Maryland for his fidelity to his ministerial office in this respect, in a case which resulted in his honorable acquittal, and an important demonstration of the antislavery position of the Church before a slave-holding people.

[14] Rev. Dr. Monroe, in "Christian Advocate," New York.

Peter Vannest was a worthy coadjutor of these faithful men. He was born in Bethlehem Township, New Jersey, in 1759. When about thirty years old he was in England, and there heard a Wesleyan preacher, whose discourse was so pungent, and seemed so personal to him, that his conscience was profoundly awakened. He at once became a Methodist, and acquired the friendship of Wesley. Henry Moore, the biographer of Wesley, commissioned him as a local preacher. He was thoroughly trained in Methodism, and was characteristically tenacious of its peculiarities throughout the remainder of his life. He returned to America in 1796, was admitted in the same year to the Philadelphia Conference, and appointed to a circuit in New Jersey, but did not travel it. The next year he was sent to New England. He labored some years in the Eastern States, then in Canada during two years, and subsequently for seventeen years in the middle states, from Western New York to Maryland. Taking a "superannuated relation" in 1821, he resided in Pemberton, N. J., till his death in 1850. He was revered as a veteran throughout the Church. "To the last he watched over the Church in Pemberton. When he was in his ninety-second year he was often seen, with staff in hand, going about from house to house, and inquiring with great interest in respect to both the temporal and spiritual welfare of the inmates."[15] His death was not only peaceful, it was triumphant. His name will often recur in our pages.

Thomas Burch joined the Philadelphia Conference in the last year of our present period. "His mother," says Boehm, "lived in the neighborhood of my father's, and belonged to the society at Boehm's Chapel, and so did

[15] Sprague, p. 277.

her sons. She had a daughter who married a preacher. The mother was a woman of intelligence and decision of character. Years afterward she lived in Columbia, and I used to put up with her with Bishop Asbury when I traveled with him. It affords me pleasure, now she and her sons sleep in the grave, to make a record of her virtues. They were from Ireland; emigrated to this country in June, 1800, and settled in the neighborhood of my father's. She was a widow, having lost her husband several years before. They had been converted under the ministry of Ireland's great missionary, Gideon Ouseley, of whom they often spoke in the most exalted terms. Thomas, the oldest son, was my father's and mother's class-leader. The class met at my father's house; it was an old class, formed before I was born. I heard some of his earliest efforts at exhortation and at preaching. I encouraged him and his brother Róbert to enter the ministry. Robert joined the Philadelphia Conference in 1804, and Thomas in 1805. I have rode hundreds of miles with them, attended a great many meetings, and heard them preach scores of times. They soon occupied some of our most important stations, with honor to themselves and usefulness to the Church. Thomas had a voice remarkably soft and musical, yet strong. He was one of the most eloquent and popular preachers of the day. In 1810, when he had been only four years in the ministry, he was stationed in Philadelphia. He died in Brooklyn, August 22, 1849, aged seventy, having been forty-four years in the ministry. He left a son, who is a member of the New York East Conference."

His labors extended from Montreal to Baltimore, in the most prominent appointments of the Church. One of his familiar ministerial associates says: "He was

one of the most amiable and sweet-tempered men whom I ever knew. All his actions as well as words breathed the spirit of good-will. He was gentle, unassuming, and affectionate in all his intercourse, and uncommonly conscientious and devout. His mind was clear and safe in its operations, and, considering his advantages for education, remarkably well-disciplined. As a preacher he always held a very high rank. The most remarkable attribute of his preaching, and indeed of his character generally, was a charming simplicity. He evidently spoke out of the depths of a well-stored mind, as well as of a full, strong, Christian heart; and there was so much of nature in his manner, and such an entire absence of all apparent effort, that it seemed as if he had only to open his lips and the right thoughts, clothed in the right language, would come of course."[16]

It was in the present period that the "Evangelical Association," sometimes called "German Albright Methodists," had its origin in Pennsylvania. This sect must not be confounded with the "United Brethren," or "German Methodists," of whom some account has been given in our pages. Jacob Albright was converted under the ministry of the elder Boehm, and became a local preacher among the Methodists[17] in the year 1790. In 1796 he began to itinerate as an evangelist among the Germans, being convinced that "his call was exclusively to them." Asbury "esteemed him as a brother beloved," and doubtless the prevalent influence and example of Methodism in Pennsylvania

[16] Rev. Dr. Luckey, in Sprague, p. 423.

[17] Lednum, p. 241. Lednum errs in naming him Peter Albright, also in attributing the German translation of the Methodist Discipline to the "Albrights." See Boehm's Reminiscences, p. 173.

prompted his extraordinary labors, and its practical system became the model of the organization of his people. In 1807 Henry Boehm procured, at his own expense, the translation and publication in German of the Methodist Discipline. The translator was an accomplished scholar, Dr. Romer, of Middletown, Pa., a physician, who had been educated in Europe as a Roman priest, but whose vigorous intellect had broken away from popery and had fallen into philosophic skepticism. The devoutly exemplary life of a remarkable Methodist woman restored his faith. He became a Methodist in 1800, and his house was for years a home and a "preaching place" of the early itinerants. He prefixed to his version of the Discipline an admirable account of Methodism. This book had great influence on the Germans of not only Pennsylvania, but of other parts of the country, for Boehm and Asbury circulated it generally. We owe to it doubtless the Methodistic type so strongly impressed upon both the Otterbein and Albright communions, the "United Brethren in Christ," and the "Evangelical Association." The former, as we have seen, have the Methodistic economy in detail; the latter has equally adopted it, both in its ecclesiastical system, and its articles of religion. Albright organized his converts in 1800. In 1803 their increase demanded more thorough care, and he was appointed their presiding elder. They were regularly organized as a Conference in 1807, the year of Romer's translation of the Discipline. Albright died six months after the Conference. In 1809 his people took the name of "Albrights," and at the same time one of their preachers framed their Articles of Faith and Discipline. In our day they are an important part of the German Methodistic Christianity of the country, report-

ing eight Conferences, three bishops, four hundred and five traveling, and three hundred and twenty-three local preachers, with more than fifty thousand communicants, and several educational institutions. Thus, while the denomination was spreading out, wave after wave, among the general population of the country, it was continually revealing special power or adaptation for special classes. Its peculiar "economy" and its spiritual vitality explain, in part, at least, this ever-varying and ever-growing success. Its ministerial itinerancy brought it into the presence, face to face, of every class in almost every locality. Its spiritual vitality met a profoundly felt want of earnest minds, in whatever class, a want that was not usually met by contemporary communions. Thousands, rich and poor, hastened from the comparatively dead Churches into its living and moving ranks. They were not inveigled into them, for from the beginning down to our day Methodism has been characteristically abhorrent of the artifices of proselytism. It opens its arms to all who come to it for spiritual help, and asks not whence they come, if they evidently come only for such help. If it at first drew, undesignedly and largely, the devout from other Churches, it has in later years, after provoking such Churches to renewed life, more than compensated their early losses by yielding to them thousands and tens of thousands of its converts and children.

CHAPTER XV.

METHODISM IN THE MIDDLE AND NORTHERN STATES, CONTINUED: 1796–1804.

The New York Conference — William Thacher — Billy Hibbard — His Humor — Early Life — Ministerial Toils and Successes — His Death — Experience of a Dutch Methodist, Note — Samuel Merwin — Sylvester Hutchinson — Ebenezer Washburn — William Anson on Grand Isle — Methodism at the Head of the Hudson — Among the Pennsylvania Mountains and Valleys, and New York Lakes — Ware and Colbert in the Wyoming Valley — Colbert's Hardships — Benjamin Bidlack — Outspread of the Church — Alfred Griffith's Trials — Progress in the Interior of New York — First Chapel of Genesee Conference — Lorenzo Dow — Colbert — Enlargement of the Field — Methodism in New York City — Statistics.

The New York Conference was still an immense territory, comprising New England, west of the Connecticut and the Green Mountains, all the Methodist field of Canada, and New York along the Hudson and westward till it reached the incipient circuits, where the itinerants from the Philadelphia Conference and from west of the Pennsylvania mountains were planting societies. At the beginning of this period there was nominally no New York Conference, its territory being included (by act of the General Conference of 1796) in the New England and Philadelphia Conferences; but by the General Conference of 1800 it was defined as including much of Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Vermont, Canada, and all New York east of the Hudson. It comprised during this period a host of able itinerants, many of whom have already been noticed. One of them, William Thatcher has left us a descrip-

tion of its primitive meetings in an account of its session in 1797. "As it was," he says, "the first in which I was ever honored with a seat, I will give a brief account of it. About a dozen of us Methodist preachers, passengers from the East, landed at New York, and made our way to the old headquarters in John-street, bearing on our arms our saddle-bags or portmanteaus. We were horseback men. We did not use trunks for traveling in those days. Not a spice of dandyism was seen in all our borders any more than leaven in a Jewish passover; we were all plain men, plain enough. We were welcomed into the little old parsonage in John-street by the venerable Thomas Morrell and Joshua Wells, ministers in the station. Wells took us as he found us, 'bag and baggage,' formed us rank and file, and placed himself, as the captain, at the head of the company, (we were in Methodist preachers' uniform,) in military style. Our walk, especially through Chatham-street, seemed to attract attention and excite notoriety. We were soon disposed of. My home was with a good old Welsh brother in Henry-street, named John Davies. On June 19 a new scene opened to my view: a Conference at the old hive of Methodism, the old John-street Meeting-house, that holy place where I felt, eight years before, the Holy Ghost say to me, for the first time, 'Go thou and preach the gospel.' What a congregation of Methodist preachers! what greeting! what love beaming in every eye! what gratulation! what rejoicing! what solemnity! The clock strikes nine. We are seated in the sanctuary, in Conference order, around the sacred altar, within which sits the venerable Asbury, Bible in hand. A chapter read, a hymn sung, we kneel. How solemn! how awful! how devout the prayer! What solemn 'amens' are responded!

Inspiration seemed to pervade the whole. The prayer closed, we arise, and are seated. The secretary calls the list of names; each responds; and how interesting to hear my own name in that book of life. The various business of Conference now engages our prayerful attention, conducted by the bishop, our president; six hours each day for the transaction of the regular Conference business, from nine o'clock to twelve, and from three to six in the afternoon; each session opened with reading the Scriptures, singing, and prayer, and closed with prayer. I have attended Conferences for half a century since, and I do not believe that Methodism or our Annual Conference has deteriorated."[1]

Thacher was born in 1769, in the town of Norwalk, Conn. "I was born again," he writes, "on the 19th of June, 1790, in Baltimore, Md.; I then joined the Methodist Episcopal Church. My conversion was not a hope obtained, but a thorough work of grace, a bright witness of pardon, an overflowing love of God, shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost, given unto me about nine o'clock that morning. Since then, a lapse of nearly sixty-seven years, I have never lost my adoption into the family of God."[2]

He began to preach in the city of New Haven in 1795. His family formed the nucleus of the Methodist Church in that community. He steadily persevered as a local preacher for two years, and in September, 1797, was admitted into the New York Conference, and ordained a deacon in June, 1799, by Bishop Asbury. Bishop Whatcoat ordained him elder in June, 1801. His first circuit was that of Litchfield, Conn. He labored very successfully, traveling about three hundred miles every four

[1] From his MSS. Wakeley's Lost Chapters, p. 490.
[2] Letter from him to the writer

weeks. "So closely," he writes, "was my time employed, that it was about twelve weeks from the period I took the circuit before I could visit my wife and little son, whom I had left at the house of her father, in New Haven, and the last quarter of this same 'Conference year,' (as itinerancy was our glory,) my good presiding elder changed my field of labor to Pittsfield Circuit, in Massachusetts and Vermont, and I was another twelve weeks from my dear family. This circuit had then two hundred and fifty members. God was with me there, and the quarter was spent happily. In 1798 I was stationed on Redding Circuit, in Fairfield County, Conn., alone on a four-weeks' circuit, one hundred and fifty miles round, with twenty-four appointments. I soon made it a two-weeks' circuit, preaching twenty-four times a fortnight, and then crossed the Housatonic River on a visit home to New Haven, fifteen miles east, on Saturday, and early on Sabbath morning started for my Sabbath forenoon appointment, twenty miles from my home. Then I was at home once a fortnight, after preaching twenty-four sermons in two weeks, and riding one hundred and eighty miles. This was my regular work for the nine months of my service on Redding Circuit. The time of Conference that year was changed from September to June."

In 1799 he was stationed on Pomfret Circuit, which was partly in Connecticut, partly in Massachusetts, and partly in the north of the state of Rhode Island, though it contained but one hundred and sixty members. In this field he had the happiness of witnessing a good revival, especially at Eastford, Thompson, Ware, and Brookfield. At the latter he formed a new class of seven members, which soon increased to twelve. Asa Kent, Isaac Bonney, David and Joshua Crowell, preachers who afterward entered the traveling connection,

were among the fruits of this success. He subsequently labored in important appointments of the middle and northern states, down to 1846, when he was superannuated, after an itinerant ministry of half a century, lacking one year. He afterward resided at Poughkeepsie, N. Y., in a happy and sanctified old age, beloved by all who knew him, and shedding around the sphere of his retirement the bright and genial influence of a remarkably cheerful temper and joyous piety. During his long and laborious life he had been able, by rigorously economizing his time, to acquire extensive general knowledge and considerable proficiency in the original languages and exegesis of the Scriptures. His pulpit exercises were always lively, instructive, and impressive. The doctrine of Christian sanctification was his favorite theme. He died in his eighty-seventh year, triumphing over severe sufferings, and praising God to the end.

A memorable character entered the ministerial ranks in 1798, Billy Hibbard, still familiar to the Church by his extraordinary wit, his devoted life, and useful labors. When his name was called in the Conference as William Hibbard, he gave no response. The bishop asked him if this was not his name. "No, sir," he replied. "What is it, then?" rejoined the bishop. "It is Billy Hibbard." "Why," said the bishop, with a smile, "that is a little boy's name." "I was a very little boy when my father gave it to me," replied Hibbard. "The Conference was convulsed with laughter," says Boehm, for many of them knew him. When his character was examined, as was customary, it was objected to him that he practiced medicine. "Are you a physician, Brother Hibbard?" inquired the bishop. "I am not," he replied; "I simply give advice in critical cases." "What

do you mean by that?" asked the bishop. "In critical cases," said Hibbard, "I always advise them to send for a physician."

His humor seemed not to interfere with, but to enhance his usefulness. It attracted hearers which perhaps nothing else could bring within his influence. His meetings were usually thronged. A tenacious Quaker hung about him, charmed with his conversation, but not venturing to attend his preaching, objecting that the custom of "Friends" required him to wear his hat in the congregation. Hibbard sent him a hearty invitation to come and wear his hat, or two of them if he wished, offering to lend him his own for the purpose if the good man would accept it. He could resist the charm no longer, went, and became a zealous Methodist, and a useful class-leader.

Hibbard was born in Norwich, Conn., February 24, 1771, of parents who observed the early religious strictness of that commonwealth, and trained him in the doctrines of the Puritan faith. In very early life, his singularly constituted mind became absorbed in religious meditation; and notwithstanding a constitutional and exuberant flow of humor, he was plunged in profound melancholy. He needed more benign views of theology than his education afforded him. "I read the Scriptures," he says, "with great attention, and in private I would weep and mourn for my sins. I had some fears that I should not find mercy at last: nevertheless, I prayed heartily that the Lord would spare my life until I could completely repent. At one time I felt encouraged, that if I were faithful, I should repent enough by the time I was thirty years old. Now the most of my nights I spent in weeping; my pillow and my shirt collar were often wet with tears, and I would

rise early to wash my face, for fear some one would discover that I had been crying, and ask me what was the matter." This mental agony increased fearfully, till it became a parallel almost to that under which the sturdy spirit of the author of the Pilgrim's Progress suffered. Not comprehending the doctrine of "justification by faith," he was engaged in a vain endeavor to wash away his sins by the tears of repentance alone; but, as he attempted to estimate the number and enormity of his offenses, an almost hopeless period seemed necessary for the task. "I began to conclude," he writes, "that I should not get through my repentance until I was fifty or sixty years old." As he ruminated over the dreary catalogue, he sunk into utter despair. "I found," he says, "to my unspeakable grief and dismay, that I was altogether unholy in my nature; my sins had corrupted every part, so that there was nothing in me that was good; I was a complete sink of sin and iniquity. I looked to see if there was no way to escape; if God could not be just and have mercy on me; but no, my sins were of that nature that they had made my nature sinful. I cried out when alone, 'O wretch that I am! undone forever! all my hopes of obtaining mercy, and getting to heaven at last, are gone, and gone forever! and it is all just and right with God.' Still, it is a little mercy to me that I am not killed and damned outright; I may live here a while, but then, at last, I must be damned; and to pray for myself will do no good; there is no mercy for me; I can do nothing that will make amends for my sins; they are past, and cannot be recalled. O wretch that I am! I have undone myself, and am undone forever!"

Such was in those days the experience of many an anxious mind, misguided by a theology the metaphysics

of which obscure the clearest and most gracious light of the divine promises. Such despondence must soon terminate in insanity, or a favorable reaction. Happily for young Hibbard, the latter was the case with him. On a Sabbath day, the quiet beauties of which looked more "dismal than a shroud," he read in his Bible of "the sufferings of Christ, and had an impression to go into secret and pray." His anguish followed him to his closet; but the impressions of the truths he had been reading were vivid. They embodied themselves, as in a vision, to his troubled mind; and he saw, as it were, "Jesus Christ at the right hand of God," looking down upon him with compassion. His despair gave way to faith; "and now," he writes, "I could see the justice of God in showing mercy to me for the sake of his Son Jesus Christ; and not only to me, but to all that would come to him, forsaking their sins, and believing that his death and suffering were the only satisfactory sacrifice for sin. I felt a sudden sense of the impropriety of my offer to be damned for the good of others, though I had no condemnation for it; but the love of God in Christ, and of Christ in God, so completely overcame me that I was all in tears, crying Glory! glory! glory! Beholding the glory of God by faith was a rapturous sight! But soon it was suggested that I must open my eyes on creation; and feeling an ardent desire for company to encourage me in this worship of God, it appeared that, on opening my eyes, I should see some. I opened my eyes, therefore, while on my knees; and behold! all nature was praising God. The sun and firmament, the trees, birds and beasts, all appeared glowing with the glory of God. I leaped from my kneeling posture, clapped my hands, and cried Glory! glory! glory! heaven and earth are full of thy glory!"

Such was Hibbard's experience at twelve years of age, and such is an example of the ordinary experience of the early Methodists, indeed, of most earnest minds. It is characterized by much feeling, and distorted and often despondent views of the divine method of human recovery, but also by profound scrupulousness, conscientious estimates of sin, and, at last, by transforming faith in Christ.

This happy state of mind continued till it was interrupted by the dogma of pre-reprobation, which was suggested to his meditations by the speculations of his neighbors; for it was then tenaciously held as an essential doctrine of the popular faith. From this terrible fallacy he at last recovered, but not till he had passed through sore mental conflicts, and received, as he supposed, special illuminations of the Spirit on the subject. He at this time anticipated vividly the doctrines of Methodism, and waited prayerfully till their promulgation should reach his neighborhood. Several years, however, elapsed before a Methodist itinerant appeared there; and during this interval he had been induced, by the example of Christians around him, and the opinions of the pastor of the village where he now resided—who approved of dancing—to attend balls, and to plunge into all the youthful gayeties of the vicinity. He lost the devout and peaceful frame of mind which he had attained through such an ordeal of mental suffering.

He continued in this backslidden state for some time, when, at last, a Methodist evangelist reached the village. His mind was reawakened by the new preaching, and, passing through another inward conflict, similar to that already described, he emerged into a still clearer light, and settled habits of piety, embrac-

ing heartily the doctrines of the new sect, though, as he had removed to Norway, Conn., and there were no Methodists within twenty miles of him, he did not yet join their communion. While waiting their arrival in the place of his new residence he felt impressed with the anticipation that it might be his duty to join their humble ministry, and preach the great truths which sustained his own soul. He resolved to begin by "exhorting," and held occasional social services in the houses of his neighbors. After two or three of these meetings he found that many persons were awakened, and thirteen professed to be converted. Removing from Norway to Hinsdale, he had more access to the Methodists, and now cast in his lot with them. Providential encouragements to devote himself more entirely to religious labors occurred. His wife, who had disliked somewhat his sturdy religious seriousness, became converted. He was induced, by peculiar circumstances, to discourse for the first time from a text at a tavern, and found afterward that an old man was converted under the sermon, who, in a few months, died in hope. His stepmother was led by his guidance into the way of life. "She never had a witness of her acceptance with God," he says, "but now stated to me her distress of mind. And we sat up all night to weep and talk and pray together, and it pleased God to make her strong in faith and joyful in hope. It was about two o'clock in the night when the Lord made her soul to rejoice in God her Saviour. Then we were so happy we wanted no sleep, but only to rejoice in the Lord. Thus we spent all the night. Glory to God! this season was sweet to my soul." He now labored more abundantly, and resolved to enter the itinerant ministry; but he desponded under the consciousness of his defects. "My way was open,"

he writes, "but my weakness almost discouraged me at times, for I had not then heard the good effect my weak sermons had, so that I began to grow gloomy and discouraged, until I attended the quarterly meeting in Pittsfield. At the prayer-meeting in the evening it was proposed to have a local preacher deliver us a sermon. He was a stranger to me; and as he appeared to be a solemn, gracious, good man, I was much pleased with the hope of a good time; but when he commenced his discourse, I perceived he was a weak brother. And as he progressed I was confirmed that he was very weak; and before he was done I concluded that he was weaker than I was; and surely, I thought, if I were as weak as he was, I would never attempt to preach again. Well, our meeting closed, and I went to my lodgings with a sad heart, to think no good was done that night. But next morning, to my surprise, I heard that five persons who heard our weak brother the night before were converted. I said nothing; but hid my face in my hands, and thought, truly these are thy marvelous works, O Lord! Thou dost make use of things which are not to bring to naught things that are. Well, I must take courage, and if I cannot shine in gifts, let me shine in humility, and adorn myself in a meek and quiet frame of mind, which is an ornament, in the sight of God, of great price."

I have been the more minute in these quotations, because they present an interesting illustration of the power and working of the religious sentiment, under divine influence, in a robust but untutored mind. This process of spiritual experience resulted in the development of a beautiful moral character, full of religious sympathy, of affectionateness, of devout simplicity, and sanctified zeal; a zeal that labored mightily, and

endured most formidable hardships throughout a ministerial career of almost half a century.

In 1797 he was directed by the presiding elder to labor on Pittsfield Circuit, Mass., which he traveled till the spring of 1798. He was then transferred to Granville Circuit, Mass., until the Granville Conference of 1798, when he joined the regular itinerant ministry, and was appointed to Dutchess Circuit, N. Y. While on the Pittsfield and Granville Circuits his labors were remarkably successful; more than one hundred persons were awakened; not a little persecution beset his course; but he became confirmed in his devotion to the work of the ministry. In 1799 he was sent to Cambridge Circuit, which was chiefly in New York, but comprehended also several Vermont towns. He began now to experience some of the privations of the early itinerancy. He had to remove his family, including three children, one hundred and fifty miles, among entire strangers, and without money to support them. During the preceding nine months he had received but eighty-four dollars, and for twenty months his salary had been one hundred and thirty-three dollars. Nearly all his own property had been expended. His thoughts under these accumulating trials, recorded in his own simple language, afford an interesting illustration of his character. "I looked at my call to this work to be of God. And I said in my heart, and to my dear wife, to God I will look for support. My wife encouraged me to suffer with patience. She often said, 'If we can do our duty to God here, and be a means of saving some souls, and get to heaven at last, all our sufferings will work together for our good.' Ah, thought I, you are a dear soul; what husband would not want to live at home, and enjoy the society of such a wife! But the

Lord calls me to leave wife and children, and for his sake I give up all."

He passed over his circuit, preaching daily, witnessing the conversion of souls, and seeking a home for his family; but finding none for many weeks, he writes: "Well, thought I, the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but I have not even a log-house. I am now tasting of my Master's fare. He suffered this for the good of souls; and O what an honor, that I may suffer a little with my Master! So I went on cheerful, trusting in the Lord. We had refreshing seasons; many were awakened, and, I trust, converted. Our circuit at that time was five hundred miles around it, and for me to preach, as I did, sixty-three sermons in four weeks, and travel five hundred miles, was too hard. But I cried unto the Lord, and he heard me; for as my day was, so was my strength."

Such were the trials of the primitive preachers, trials which, as we have elsewhere remarked, either drove them from the field, or made them heroes; their successors may well blush to repine at their more fortunate lot. About three hundred persons were converted during his travels on Cambridge Circuit. The indomitable Henry Ryan shared its labors, and they "pushed the battle to the gates." Violent persecutions opposed them. Hibbard writes: "Brother Ryan was in good health and high spirits for this great work. The persecution in Thurman's Patent, where we had lived, was truly grievous. Many young people that experienced religion were turned out of doors by their parents. Some of them were whipped cruelly. Two young women were so whipped by their father that the blood ran down from their backs to their feet, and he then turned them out of doors, and they walked fifteen

miles to a Methodist society. When they recovered of their wounds, some of our sisters informed me that they had many scars, some five inches long. Their two young brothers, one fourteen, and the other twelve years old, had both experienced religion, through the instrumentality of the Methodists, and suffered in like manner. It astonished me that a father of ten children, eight of whom had experienced religion, should drive six from his house, and whip these two boys, for no other crime, in reality, than because they worshiped God with the Methodists."

These persecuted children agreed to visit and pray with their enraged parent together at a given time. "With hearts all engaged in prayer for their father, they entered his house, and, in the most affectionate manner, made known to him their tender regard for his precious soul. The power of God rested on them, insomuch that the old man was not able to answer them. He threw himself upon the bed, and made a howling noise, while they prayed. The poor old man could not arise from it. Something rendered him helpless, insomuch that he was not able to whip his boys any more for worshiping God. He lived in this helpless state eight years afterward. From this time the persecution began to cease in this part of the circuit."

At the New York Conference of 1800 Hibbard was appointed to Granville Circuit, Mass. His subsequent circuits were, 1801, Long Island; 1802, Dutchess and Columbia, N. Y.; 1803–4, Dutchess; 1805–6, Croton, N. Y., with a congenial colleague, the quaint John Finnegan; 1807–8, New Rochelle, N. Y. In 1809 he reentered New England, and was the colleague of Isaac Candee on Redding Circuit. Their labors were unusually successful; extensive reformations prevailed, and

about three hundred persons were converted. In 1810 he was on Courtland Circuit, N. Y., with Ezekiel Canfield, and 1811–12 at Rhinebeck, N. Y. At the Conference of 1813 he was again returned to New England, and appointed to Pittsfield Circuit, Mass. He was sent to this circuit also in 1814, but with the understanding that he should accept a chaplaincy in the army if an opportunity occurred. He did so, and as war then raged on the northern frontier, he was appointed to a regiment, and was with the troops some time in the neighborhood of Boston. "Not long after I returned home," he says, "I had the satisfaction to hear of forty-three, who were in our regiment, that had experienced religion, and joined our society."

In 1815 he was sent to Litchfield Circuit, Conn., and labored with more than even his usual success. About six hundred persons, it is estimated, were converted; and as many joined the Congregational Churches; an impulse was given to the cause of God in every direction through the region of the circuit. In 1816–17 he labored on Granville Circuit; 1818, Chatham, N. Y.; 1819–20, New York city, with Aaron Hunt, Samuel Merwin, Laban Clark, and Tobias Spicer; 1821, Petersburgh, N. Y.; 1822, Dalton, N. Y. Having ruptured a blood-vessel while preaching in New York city, his health had declined so far by this time that he was compelled to retire into the ranks of the "superannuated or wornout preachers," where he remained three years, but we find him again in the field in 1826, when he was appointed to Petersburgh; 1827–8, to Salisbury; and 1829, to Tyringham.

Being still subject to inflammation of the lungs, and worn out with infirmities and years, he now returned to the superannuated ranks, where he continued till his

death. He had labored in the Church about fifty years, devotedly and successfully. He died in 1844, in great peace, and in the forty-sixth year of his itinerant ministry. "When asked by a son in the gospel, how he felt in view of death," he replied, "My mind is calm as a summer eve;" and when again asked if death had any terror, he answered, "No, surely!"[3]

Methodism, while adapted to all classes, had peculiar adaptations to the unlettered and neglected masses. Its simple doctrines were intelligible to their comprehension, and its energetic economy reached them in whatever recesses of obscurity. At the same time its living agents were a providential counterpart to these adaptations. Many of its preachers seemed to have been raised up exclusively for the poor and illiterate, and the peculiarities which might have interfered with their usefulness in higher spheres secured them greater success among men of lowly life. Hibbard was an example of this remark. His memoirs abound in striking instances of the power of his ministry; even his humor, sanctified as it was, had its good agency; the hardest and the rudest characters yielded to his influence.[4]

[3] Minutes, 1845.

[4] It would not be deemed compatible with the dignity of history to narrate some of the incidents of his humble memoirs; but as my pages aim at the best possible illustration of the primitive character and influence of Methodism, I insert an instance which exemplifies his influence over an untutored family. It is an account of the testimony of a converted Dutchman, given in a love-feast, about the present period Hibbard writes: "He said, 'Mine dear brethren, I want to tell you some mine experience. When the Metodists first came into these parts I tot I was doing bery well, for mine wife and I had two sons, Ned and Jim, and we had a good farm that Neddy and I could work bery well, so I let Jim go out to work about fourteen miles off from home. But de Metodists come into our parts, and Neddy went to dare meeting, and he got converted, and I tot we should all be undone; so I told Ned he must not go to dese Metodist meetings, for so much praying and so much going to meeting would ruin us all.

Hibbard was a very genial mind, humorous, amiable, without learning, yet abounding in intelligence, fond of anecdote, and exceedingly happy in telling one; surprisingly apt in laconic remarks, richly endowed with

But Neddy said, "O, fader, I must serve de Lord, and save my soul." But, I said, you must do de work too. So I gave him a hard stint on de day of dare meeting; but he work so hard dat he got his stint done, and went to de meeting after all. While I set on my stoop and smoked mine pipe, I see him go over de hill to de Metodist meeting, and I said to my wife Elizabet, We shall be undone, for our Ned will go to dese meetings; and she said, "What can we do?" Well, I said, den I will stint him harder; and so I did several times when de meeting come. But Neddy worked hard, and sometimes he got some boys to help him, so dat he would go off to de meeting while I set on mine stoop and smoked mine pipe. I could see Ned go over de hill. I said one day, O mine Got! what can I do? dis boy will go to dese meetings, after all I can do. So when Ned come home, I said, Ned, you must leave off going to dese meetings, or I will send for Jim to come home, and turn you away. But Neddy said, "O, fader, I must serve de Lord, and save my soul!" Well, den, I will send for Jim. So I sent for Jim; and when he come home, den I heard he had been to the Metodist meeting, where he had lived, and he was converted too. And Ned and Jim both said, "O, fader, we must serve de Lord, and save our souls!" But I said to mine wife, Dese Metodists must be wrong; da will undo us all, for da have got Ned and Jim both. I wish you would go to dare meeting, and you can see what is wrong; but Ned and Jim can't see it. So de next meeting-day de old woman went wid Ned and Jim, but I set on mine stoop and smoked mine pipe. But I said to mineself, I guess dese Metodists have got dare match, to get de old woman, and she will see what's wrong. So I smoked mine pipe, and lookt to see dem come back. By and by I see dem coming; and when da come near, I see de tears run down mine wife's face. Den I said, O mine Got, da have got de old woman too! I tot I am undone, for da have got Ned and Jim, and de old woman; and when da come on de stoop, mine wife said, "O we must not speak against dis people, for da are de people of Got." But I said nothing, for I had not been to any of de meetings, so I was in great trouble. But in a few days after I heard dat dere was a missionary going to preach a little ways off; so I tot I would go, for I tot it would not hurt anybody to go to his meeting; and I went wid Ned and Jim and mine wife, and he preacht; but dere was noting done till after de meeting was over, and den dare was two young men in de toder room dat sung and prayed so good as anybody, and da prayed for dar old fader too. And many cried, and I tot da prayed bery well. After dis I was going out of de door to go home, and a woman said to me, "Mr.

the spirit of piety, ever ready for religious conversation, a thorough lover of his country, and staunchly republican in his politics; a tireless laborer in the pulpit, and one of the most useful men in our early annals. His love and devotion to the Church were enthusiastic. He died soon after its division by the separation of the Methodists Episcopal Church South, and, it is said, that event broke his spirit, and hastened his death.

Samuel Merwin will not soon be forgotten among the Methodist societies of the Atlantic States from Canada to Maryland. Dignified in person, powerful in eloquence, generous in spirit, and mighty in labors, he was one of the most popular preachers of his day. He was born in Durham, Conn., September 13, 1777. His early education was strictly religious, and it is said he was from childhood the subject of deep spiritual impressions —an explanation, in part, of the remarkable force of his

——, you must be a happy man, to have two such young men as dem dat prayed." I said, Was dat Ned and Jim? She said, "Yes." O, I felt so mad to tink da had prayed for me, and exposed me before all de people! But I said noting, but went home; and I went right to bed. But now mine mind was more troubled dan ever before, for I began to tink how wicked I was to stint poor Neddy so hard, and try to hinder him from saving his soul; but I said noting, and mine wife said noting; so I tried to go sleep; but as soon as I shut mine eyes I could see Neddy going over de hill to go to his meeting after he had done his hard stint, so tired and weary. Den I felt worse and worse; and by and by I groaned out, and mine wife axt me what's de matter. I said, I believe I am dying. She said, "Shall I call up Ned and Jim!" I said, Yes. And Jim come to de bed, and said, "O fader, what is de matter?" I said, I believe I am dying. And he said, "Fader, shall I pray for you?" I said, O yes, and Neddy too. And glory be to Got! I belive he heard prayer; for tough I felt my sins like a mountain load to sink me down to hell, I cried, O Got, have mercy on me, a poor sinner! and by and by I feel someting run all over me, and split mine heart all to pieces; and I felt so humble and so loving, dat I rejoice and praise Got; and now I am resolved to serve Got wit Ned and Jim, and mine wife, and dese Metodists.'"

religious principles and address in subsequent years. While quite young his conscience was awakened under a funeral discourse; and it is believed that he was converted at this time, but, for lack of suitable guidance, relapsed into a state of carelessness, till the Methodist ministry came to his place of residence, then at New Durham, N. Y., where he was again thoroughly awakened and soundly converted. Glowing with joy and the zeal of a new life, he soon began to exhort on those social religious occasions with which Methodism abounds, and which have eminently tended to draw forth the talent of its young men, and thereby to recruit its ministry. When not yet twenty years of age he was dispatched, by a presiding elder, to labor on a part of the Delaware District, N. Y., and in the year 1800 was received as a probationer at the New York Conference. And now commenced that career of ministerial labors and successes, extending through about forty years, which has rendered his name familiar through our northern and middle Churches. The long catalogue of his appointments is a significant memorial of his services. He was sent, in 1800, to Long Island Circuit; 1801, Redding, Conn.; 1802, Adams, Mass.; 1803, Montreal, Canada; 1804, New York city; 1805, Redding, Conn., with Peter Moriarty; 1806, Boston, Mass., with Peter Jayne; 1807, 1808, Newport, R. I.; 1809, Bristol and Rhode Island; 1810, Albany Circuit; 1811, Schenectady; 1812, 1813, Albany city; 1814, Brooklyn, N. Y.; 1815–1818, presiding elder of New York District; 1819, New York city; 1820, Albany city; 1821–1823, New Haven District; 1824, 1825, Baltimore; 1826, 1827, Philadelphia; 1828, 1829, Troy, N. Y.; 1830, 1831, New York city; 1832–1835, New York District; 1836, New York city; 1837, 1838, Rhinebeck, N. Y. He de-

parted to his rest in peace, at Rhinebeck, N. Y., January 13, 1839.

It will be inferred, from the important posts assigned him, that he was a chief among his brethren. His person was large and commanding, and his voice musical and strong, swaying the greatest assemblies. Exceedingly graceful in his movements and lively in his affections, he was a perfect Christian gentleman. He possessed superior powers of government, and discharged the functions of the presiding eldership with special ability. The invaluable talent of reconciling discordant brethren or societies was his in a rare degree, and the kindly, sympathetic spirit which usually accompanies that talent characterized him everywhere, and imparted to his ministrations a richly consolatary character. His pulpit appeals were accompanied by a flowing and sweeping eloquence, sometimes rising to wonderful power and majesty, and the living evidences of his usefulness are yet found throughout the whole extent of his pastoral labors. His brethren of the New York Conference say of him, "Samuel Merwin loved his Church, and was most ardently devoted to its interests. Wise in counsel and skilled in execution, he was always ready to step forward in defense of its rights: he was the friend of all its literary and benevolent institutions; to support them he gave his influence and his money; his voice, too, was often heard, powerfully and successfully pleading their respective claims. But he has gone, and 'precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.'" It is to be regretted that our records allow not of a more adequate sketch of such a man.

Few men were more prominent in the service of the Church during this period than Sylvester Hutchinson; but as he located the next year after its close, the

Minutes give him no other record than his appointments.[2] Yet he traveled seventeen years in New Jersey, Maryland, New York, New England. He died in 1840, and was buried at Hightstown, N. J. "In 1800," says one of our authorities,[3] "he was stationed in New York city, with Jesse Lee and John M'Claskey, who were giants in those days. In 1801 he was the traveling companion of Bishop Whatcoat. In 1803 he was the successor of Shadrach Bostwick, as presiding elder on the Pittsfield District. Among the preachers under his charge, at that time, were the youthful and eloquent Samuel Merwin; Martin Ruter, who was then also in the morning of life, and in after years fell a martyr to the work in Texas; Seth Crowell, with a clear, logical head, and a warm heart; Luman Andrus, amiable, and of a sweet disposition; William Anson, rejoicing that he was counted worthy to suffer in a cause so good; Henry Eames, with his warm Irish heart; Elijah Chichester, like Elijah of old, faithful to his God, and faithful to others." When he traveled Pittsfield District, Hutchinson was the presiding elder of the youthful Elijah Hedding, afterward bishop. Hedding always spoke of him in the highest terms. "The district," says Bishop Clark, in his Life of Hedding, "was of gigantic proportions, and the presiding eldership no sinecure in those early days. It embraced New York city, the whole of Long Island, and extended northward, embracing the whole territory having the Connecticut River on the east and Hudson River and Lake Champlain on the west, and stretching far into Canada. It embraced

[2] The Minutes give short obituaries of all who died members of Conference. Wakeley gives some details of Hutchinson's life in the "Lost Chapters," which should be corrected by Atkinson's "Memorials of Methodism in New Jersey."

[3] Wakeley, p. 288.

nearly the whole territory now included within three annual conferences. Hutchinson was a man of burning zeal and indomitable energy. Mounted upon his favorite horse, he would ride through the entire extent of his district once in three months, visiting each circuit, and invariably filling all his numerous appointments. His voice rung like a trumpet blast; and with words of fire, and in powerful demonstration of the Spirit, he preached Christ Jesus. His appointments show the rank he held in the ministry—the profound confidence his brethren had in him. He was a small man, but had a very strong voice, and seemed never to be wearied; he lived in the Spirit, and was constantly ready for every good word and work."

With such itinerants were associated in the northern field, in these years, many congenial and mightier men: Garrettson, Bostwick, Arnold, Jewel, Draper, Crowell, Sawyer, M'Claskey, Morrell, Ostrander, Michael Coate, Jayne, Moriarty, Ryan, and others, who have already received or will hereafter claim our attention. The revivals, which have been noticed, as prevailing in the South and middle parts of the country, extended up the Hudson and spread westward to the New York Lakes, and eastward over New England, greatly recruiting the societies and the ministry. Joseph Sawyer, whom we shall soon meet in Canada, preached, in 1798, a discourse of great effect in Petersburgh, N. Y., under which Ebenezer Washburn, a school teacher, was awakened. He hastened to the nearest society, in Hoosack, and joined it. His wife and several of his neighbors were converted, and they formed the first class in Petersburgh. Washburn became one of the holiest and most useful of the early itinerants. He began his successful career by exhorting among his

neighbors, and it was not long before he reported thirty converts on the Petersburgh Mountains. This was the beginning of nearly half a century of ministerial labors, sufferings, and triumphs.

Before the end of our period Methodism was successfully planted in Troy. A class was formed there as early as 1801, but it had nearly expired, when, in 1804, John Wright, a lay Methodist, moving to the city, inquired for his brethren, and found "a small company worshiping in a private house."[5] In three or four years they were able to build a humble temple in State-street. It became the headquarters of a "charge," including Troy, Albia, West Troy, Lansingburgh, and Brunswick, but for twelve or fifteen years the whole membership hardly exceeded one hundred. Troy now gives name to a powerful Conference.

In 1802 William Anson was sent to plant the Church on Grand Isle, in Lake Champlain. He extended his circuit to other islands, and even into Canada, and at the close of the year reported more than a hundred Church members. Anson joined the Conference two years before going to Grand Isle, and spent them in hard work in Canada. He was twenty-three years in the itinerancy. In 1823 he was compelled by enfeebled health to retire from effective service, and was returned supernumerary. He sought repose on his farm, at Malta, Saratoga County, N. Y. In the spring of 1847 he was attacked by paralysis, and rapidly declined in body and mind until he died on the 17th of July, 1848. He joined the itinerant ministry when it was beset with privations and imposed labors which tried the souls of the bravest men. "He had his full share of hardships," say his co-laborers, "but never flinched." He was the

[5] Park's Troy Conference Miscellany, p. 48.

"pioneer of Methodism in many places, and carried the proclamation of free salvation into the wilderness of Vermont, northern New York, and Canada, and often from house to house." His piety is pronounced "undoubted," his integrity "sterling," and his talents "respectable." "He was laborious and useful, and his preaching plain and powerful." The name of such a man should not be allowed to perish.

Before the end of the century Methodism had got a permanent footing in Warren County, near the head of the Hudson, a locality then called "Thurman's Patent." Josiah Woodward and Samuel Crane, with their families, formed the nucleus of the society which gave origin at last to the "Old Thurman Circuit." The first information they ever received of Methodism was the news of the drowning of Richard Jacobs, who, as we have seen, perished in Schroon Lake, while traversing, as an evangelist, this distant wilderness. His death led to inquiries about the "new sect;" the settlers were excited with curiosity to see and hear an itinerant. Henry Ryan arrived there in 1798, and lodged with Crane. Woodward invited him to preach at his neighboring house. Ryan stayed long enough to form a class, comprising these two families, seven members in all. The little society was attached to the nearest circuit, and supplied with preaching once in four weeks. Another class was soon formed at Johnsburgh, "and thus Methodism was introduced into that town."[6] Subsequently "Thurman's Patent" became "Thurman Circuit," extending through ten towns, and comprehending all the Methodism in that region; it has, still later, grown to half a dozen circuits. The early itinerants had hard fare in this wilderness. One

[6] Autobiography of Rev. Tobias Spicer, p. 33. New York: 1831.

of them says, "it then embraced a newly-settled country, rough and poor. The accommodations for a preacher's family, and their means of support, were very scanty. The only place I could obtain for a residence consisted of one room, having only one small window. The room was so small that it could contain only our bed, a table, three chairs, one chest, and two trunks. On one side of the fireplace was a little closet, which contained our table-dishes and some of our provisions. This room served us as our parlor, dining-room, kitchen, and bedroom; and it was also my study. But we were not much mortified to appear thus poor, for many of our neighbors around us were poor also, and we appeared as well as a large portion of our brethren on the circuit. There was at that time very little money circulating in these parts. On this account, our contributions consisted principally in such articles of provision as our friends could spare. All the support I received from the circuit, during the whole year, amounted to only eighty-five dollars; perhaps one half of this was cash."[7]

Meanwhile the denomination was extending its lines in the interior regions of the Pennsylvania Mountain valleys and New York Lakes. Ware's modest ministry there, as presiding elder, was like "the still small voice," in contrast with the tempestuous eloquence of his predecessor, Valentine Cook; but the contrast was salutary, and perhaps needed, for the scenes of excitement which had prevailed through these wildernesses required his tempering counsels and example. In the spring of 1797 Colbert returned to the Wyoming Valley, and went preaching from settlement to settlement, attended by the old hardships and demonstrations of

[7] Spicer.

his ministry. He reached the extremity of his circuit and wrote, "Thus have I got on the frontiers of Wyoming once more, on my way to Tioga. Hard times I now expect." He had them fully up to his expectation, in his mountain lodgings, his long and stormy journeys, his small log-cabin congregations, sometimes so disturbed by the crying of children that he could hardly hear his own voice. His journals are a curious record of the primitive life of these regions. "I have had," he says, "a very disagreeable ride from Bennet's, to where a few women had gathered for preaching, but was called off, before I began, to a woman in the neighborhood who was sick, therefore I neither preached, prayed, nor exhorted, but chose to ride until ten o'clock at night in preference to staying in the filth among children, cattle, hogs, and, no doubt, an army of fleas." On his way from this place to another appointment he writes, "The wind was blowing, the lightning blazing, the thunder roaring, and the rain so pouring down that I could not see to escape the timber that might be falling around me. I was wet enough when I reached my appointment, and found it hard to get a dry corner to stand and preach in." He goes to Canandaigua, Seneca Lake, etc., and encounters similar difficulties. "A man," he says, needs to have a good constitution and a large stock of patience to travel this circuit. May the Lord bless me with the latter!" He was sick also with chills and fever, the effect of his exposures, but drove on in his work. "The people," he says, "called to hear preaching in the forenoon. I did not feel able to sit up, but wishing them to hear something, in the name of the Lord I made an attempt to preach, but found myself unable, and had to lie down, desiring the friends to hold a prayer-meeting. After several of them had

prayed I made a second attempt, and was enabled to preach and meet two classes. In the afternoon I rode to Robert Alexander's, and found Alward White preaching. I gave an exhortation after him, and have reason to be thankful that I feel better than I did in the morning." He hardly names the places where he thus preaches and suffers; most of them had yet no names, but they were on the old Seneca Circuit. The chronicler of the Church there says: "The brave hearts that stood it out, and buffeted the dangers and difficulties of the country when it was a frontier, must have the Gospel, and our old itinerants were the men to carry it to them. They could shake and burn one day, and encounter the storm and mud, and preach in open, comfortless log 'pens' the next, for the sake of Christ and souls. So did the heroic Colbert. The labor was hard, the sacrifices great, and as to *pay*, he says nothing about it. The probability is that he received little more than his board and the keeping of his horse."[8] Upon closing his labors upon the circuit he makes the following record: "I have traveled from the 20th of May to the 12th of September on Seneca Circuit, in Ontario and Onondaga Counties, in the state of New York, among the lakes Canandaigua, Honeoye, and Crooked Lake, west and southwest, and Cayuga, Owasco, and Skaneateles, east and northeast of the Seneca Lake. The inhabitants are principally immigrants from the New England States, the older settlements in the state of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, and, toward the Honeoye, some are from Maryland. Hamilton Jefferson has been my colleague, a man high in the esteem of many of the people. The people generally have been raised under a Calvinistic ministry. Some who joined us appear to be

[8] Peck, p. 133.

much alive to God. In many places the people are extremely ignorant, and in others they are well informed. Truly I can say that since I have been in this country my life has been one continual scene of toil." Bad as these scenes were, they were an improvement on what he had witnessed in his former travels here. Numerous societies were now organized, the beginning of the Methodism that now flourishes in all the region like its rich harvests. The circuit extended from the Skaneateles to the Canandaigua Lakes. Colbert names but two small villages upon it, Geneva and Canandaigua, and in neither of these had he yet permanent "appointments."

In 1798 he was again on Wyoming and Northumberland Circuits. The Conference rightly judged that he was the man for the mountains. The next year this interior field was rearranged, the northern portion being connected with a district that comprehended Albany and the Mohawk region, under the presiding eldership of William M'Lenahan. There were three circuits: Seneca, with Jonathan Bateman for preacher; Tioga, with John Leach and David Dunham; Wyoming and Northumberland, with James Moore, Benjamin Bidlack, and David Stevens. These evangelists did valiant service; Bidlack especially was a noted hero, and was here in his own field. He had been in the Revolutionary army, being at Boston when Washington took command, and at Yorktown when Cornwallis surrendered; had been noted "for fun and frolic," for his love of strong drink and "good fellowship," and yet had a singular reverence for religion. He would attend gravely the preaching of the early evangelists, however drunk he might be at the time. "He sometimes sung with great gusto, and even raised the tune, when he could hardly stand without holding on to something." He

once appeared in the congregation with his usual gravity, but with a bottle of rum in his pocket, its long neck visible to all around. Anthony Turck, a Dutch itinerant, fiery with zeal, and "bold as a lion," saw him, and poured forth a terrible denunciation against drunkenness. The congregation were alarmed, for they knew Bidlack's courage; but he trembled under the word, and "instead of resenting the attack, went home stung with remorse." He publicly confessed his vices, repented, became a Methodist, and, before long, was traveling with the itinerants, one of their most flaming fellow-laborers. He was a superior singer, an important advantage in the early ministry, and a preacher of acknowledged talents. "Bidlack has become a Methodist preacher rang through the country, and stirred up a mighty commotion." He was a gigantic man, over six feet high, with broad shoulders, and strong limbs. He became at last the venerated "Father Bidlack," with white flowing locks, a face full of generous character, and universally beloved of the people. He died, in the peace of the gospel, in 1843, aged eighty-seven years.

In 1800 Wyoming and Northumberland were attached to the Philadelphia District, under the presiding eldership of the veteran Joseph Everett, already familiar to us, while Oneida and Cayuga, Seneca and Tioga were connected with the Albany District. Asa Smith, Bidlack, and Gruber were among the evangelists. "The word of God mightily grew and prevailed this year" throughout these regions, and the first meeting-house in Wilkesbarre was erected. The next year Owen was back again in this his old territory, where he had labored for about ten years. The evangelical blacksmith was in full strength, and kept all around him in motion. "Indeed," says the local historian, "he had

been hammering upon the consciences of the people of Wyoming, as an exhorter or preacher, ever since the summer of 1788, and either the people did not consider him worn out, or they were not consulted in the appointment."

The field continually enlarges during the remainder of this period; its ministerial laborers multiply, and church edifices begin to appear; but the evangelists still have to endure many of their early sufferings. About the close of the period Alfred Griffith, who still survives, was sent, with Christopher Spry, to the Wyoming Circuit. "The circuit," says his biographer, "like all others in that day, was large, and the fare poor and coarse enough. The only drink they had besides water was coffee made of buckwheat bread. The process of making this drink was to hold a piece of buckwheat bread, called a slapjack, in the fire in the tongs till completely charred, and then to boil it in an iron pot. The liquor thus obtained, sweetened with maple sugar, received from Griffith the name of 'slapjack coffee,' and by this designation came to be generally known. As to eating, from early in June till autumn, except when on the Flats, they had not a morsel of meat of any kind. Poultry could not be raised, nor pigs, nor sheep, for as soon as anything of the sort made its appearance it was carried off by the foxes, the bears, the panthers, or the wolves. If now and then a man was found bold enough to attempt to keep a hog, the pen was built just at the front door of the cabin; and if he owned a calf it was brought up and tied behind the house every night, and the guns kept loaded and at hand to drive off or kill the invading panther or wolf. As they rested at night on their bearskins, or deerskins, they frequently heard around them

the wailing scream of the panther or the howl of the wolf; and the sight of the bear was more common than that of a pig or a lamb. The sleeping was as poor in some instances as the eating and drinking. About fifty miles from the Flats lived a humble family, whose house was both stopping place and church for our young itinerant, who had for his bed, when he remained over night with them, the frame of an old loom, across whose beams were laid slats, and on the slats a bear-skin or two. These, with a pair of clean sheets, which were kept exclusively for the preachers, and a few superincumbent duds, constituted the sleeping apparatus."[9]

This was probably an extreme case; but it indicates the general hardships of these most devoted and most successful apostles of modern Christendom. They prepared better things for their successors.

We have had occasional glimpses of the progress of the denomination in the more northern portions of these interior regions. After the creation of the Delaware Circuit in 1794, at the sources of the Delaware, and comprehending the country between the Susquehanna and the Catskill Mountains, no new circuit is recorded till 1798, when Chenango appears, comprising the extremes of Otsego, Herkimer, and Tioga, and the Chenango and Unadilla valleys. Mohawk and Cayuga, and Oneida are reported the next year, the former detached from Herkimer, with one hundred and eighteen members. Oneida has less than thirty. In 1800 the great revivals, prevailing in most other portions of the Church, swept over all this section; the societies rapidly enlarged, and nearly sixteen hundred members were reported from westward of the Albany and Saratoga Circuits. Powerful itinerants were traversing the country under

[9] Rev. Dr. Nadal, in "Ladies' Repository."

M'Lenahan—Turck, Bidlack, Morris, Willy, Newman, Vredenburgh, Gruber, and others, and this year the first Methodist chapel within the limits of the Genesee Conference was erected at Sauquoit. "At the laying of the foundation stone the late Kirkland Griffin, Esq., then a member of this society, but now a saint in heaven, knelt and offered up prayer to God. The work progressed, and when the house was ready to be raised, brethren and sisters in large numbers, considering the sparseness of the population, came together; the latter furnishing, in true temperance style, cake and cheese as the most appropriate refreshment. Before the raising was commenced, Lemuel Smith, a located preacher, gave out a hymn, which all present cordially united in singing, when, with great ardor and appropriateness, he addressed the throne of grace. After the building was up, and before the persons present separated, there were again singing and prayer directed by the same individual. The house thus erected has probably been the spiritual birthplace of more than a thousand souls; and how many have been blessed and comforted and sanctified within its sacred walls eternity alone can determine. With the exception of perhaps one log chapel, it was the first Methodist meeting-house erected in the state of New York west of Albany. The first sermon preached in it was delivered by Bishop Whatcoat, the house being then in an unfinished state."[10] It has since given place to a more substantial edifice.

In 1802 Colbert became presiding elder of the Albany District, which took in all this county. His stentorian trumpet resounded all over it. The famous and erratic Lorenzo Dow broke into the region and worked mightily with the circuit evangelists. "He is tall," writes Col-

[10] Rev. Dr. Paddock, in Christian Advocate, 1840.

bert, "of a very slender form; his countenance is serene, solemn, but not dejected, and his words, or rather God's words delivered by him, cut like a sword. At night Lorenzo Dow delivered one of the greatest discourses I ever heard against atheism, deism, and Calvinism. He took his text in about the middle of his sermon. Brother Covel arose after him, and said that a young man desired the prayers of the preachers. Several others desired to be prayed for, and at length there was a wonderful display of divine power in the large congregation, beneath the boughs of the trees and the starry heavens."

He speaks of another discourse by Dow, in the woods, by candle-light; "a powerful sermon," under which "many were brought to cry for mercy." Colbert continued, through most of these years, to labor indefatigably in founding the Church throughout the interior parts of the state; he returned, in 1804, to Maryland, and took charge of the Chesapeake District. In this year we find Methodism well organized through all this new country, though strangely enough divided in its ecclesiastical arrangement. Black River, Western, and Herkimer Circuits are on Albany District, under Elijah Woolsey, and in New York Conference; Wyoming is on Susquehanna District, under James Smith, in Baltimore Conference; the remaining circuits, no less than eight in number—Chenango, Westmoreland, Otsego, Pompey, Cayuga, Ontario, Seneca, and Tioga—form the "Genesee District," under Joseph Jewell, in Philadelphia Conference. To many elder Methodists of the region, this bare catalogue of names will have a peculiar significance. We see already the forthcoming of the renowned "old Genesee Conference," and the mighty Methodism of interior and western New York. It was even now preparing to move westward of the

Genesee River, where David Hamlin, a lay Methodist settler, is (in 1804) reading Wesley's sermons on Sundays to his neighbors in his own cabin, and waiting and watching for the coming of the itinerants. Of several of the stalwart evangelists who founded Methodism in these wilds I have already given some account—of Owen, Mills, Colbert, Cook, Ware, Gruber, and Bidlack; but of most of them we have no other information than the vague but grateful traditions of the people, and the allusions of our early records. Anthony Turck was a rough German, who labored mightily for ten years, and died in the itinerancy, "a holy man," say the old Minutes; "indefatigable and successful;" James Paynter, a good preacher, a man of few words, exceedingly grave, yet as amiable, a great laborer, from these valleys to the valleys of Western Virginia; after preaching forty-eight years he died in Maryland, exclaiming, "I am not afraid to die;" Alward White, thirty-nine years in the ministry, a modest, unassuming, but acceptable preacher; Cornelius Mars, called "thundering Mars," for his manner of preaching; John Brodhead, of note in New England, now a young man of extraordinary power in the pulpit; he "hurled thunderbolts," says one of our authorities; Roger Benton, a "short, thickset man, a most excellent preacher," singularly "modest and meek," with a stentorian voice; he early broke down under his labors and exposures, and died in peace; "a better man I never knew," says one of his friends; John Leach, "a pious, circumspect man," of short and afflicted ministry, who died in "great peace" in New Jersey, in 1802; James Moore, an Irishman of very precise manners, of shrewdness, and good preaching talents; David Stevens, from Baltimore, who "labored incessantly for the salvation

of souls for thirty years, and," say the Minutes, "died full of faith and the Holy Ghost" in Maryland, 1825; James Polhamus, who spent twenty-six years in the ministry, popular, useful, a "great exhorter," his "appeals overwhelming," and "revivals following him wherever he went;" James Smith, called "Irish Jemmy," a "good preacher, but a little queer;" Morris Howe, "a great exhorter," twenty-seven years in the itinerancy, and spoken of as a very pathetic preacher; Robert Burch, brother to Thomas Burch, and his equal in the pulpit, excessively social, and abounding in Irish wit and true piety; Jonathan Newman, a great laborer, somewhat eccentric and vacillating, but honest and zealous, with a heavy voice, "capable of an immense compass; when he was fairly under way he slightly drew one corner of his mouth in the direction of his ear, and rolled out peal after peal like the roaring of distant thunder;" Timothy Dewy, one of the founders of Methodism in New England, as well as New York, eccentric, firm to obstinacy, a grappler of theological problems, a great reader, and, it is said, "a profound thinker," often a tremendous preacher, "ardently pious, a true-hearted Methodist, never moved by temptations to forsake the Church, although these were numerous and urgent; a great and good man." These are but a portion of the primitive corps; their names are still precious to the elder Methodists that linger in the scenes of their hard toils. They were soon to be followed by men more familiar to our memory—Draper, Lane, Jewell, Ensign, Vannest, Puffer, Paddock, Bigelow, Chamberlayne, Fillmore, Lanning, Seager, Grant, Harmon, Mattison, Luckey, Peck, and other founders of the vigorous Conferences that now embody so much of the Methodism of interior New York and Pennsylvania.

The Church was greatly fortified in New York city during this period. In 1797 there were nearly eight hundred members crowded in the congregations of John-street and Forsyth-street. They were compelled to erect another temple. "An admirable site" was obtained on Duane-street, and George Roberts laid the corner-stone of the edifice on June 29, 1797. He continued to preach there in the open air, standing on the foundation stones, for several weeks. "Mighty displays of the power of God," says the chronicler, "have been witnessed within its hallowed walls. There are those who are scattered all over the country, and many in heaven, who look back to the old church as their spiritual birthplace. When God writeth up the people, it will be said that this and that man were born here. Bishop Asbury preached his last sermon in New York in this honored temple."[11] In 1800 Jesse Lee says in his journal: "It is now thirty-two years since our society built a place of worship in this place, and they have been increasing and multiplying ever since. We have now five houses of public worship. The first is commonly called 'The Old Church,' (John-street,) the second is called Bowery, (Forsyth-street,) the third, North River, (Duane street,) and the fourth is called the Two-Mile-Stone, being two miles from the center of the city. The fifth is the African Church, which was erected by the people of color for themselves to worship in, yet they are to be governed by the Methodists in all their spiritual matters. This church was built the latter part of last year. Three traveling preachers are stationed in the city, and are assisted by several local preachers."

The Two-Mile-Stone Church was in the Bowery, two

[11] Wakeley's Lost Chapters, p. 496.

miles from the old City Hall, which stood on the corner of Wall and Nassau streets. The family of Gilbert Coutant, long a venerated citizen, was the germ of this society, forming its first class. Seventh-street Church sprung from it.

The city churches were supplied throughout these years by distinguished preachers: Roberts, Lee, Wells, Beauchamp, M'Claskey, Sargent, Michael Coate, Hutchinson, Morrell, Ostrander, Snethen, Merwin, and others. They presented also a strong array of official laymen, many of whom were practical evangelists, and not a few of whom have left families representative of the denomination among their fellow citizens. Hick, Arcularius, Staples, Chase, Russell, Disosway, Smith, Mercein, Suckley, Coutant, Dando, Bleecker, Mead, Carpenter, are but a few of the memorable names of the times. At the close of the period there were more than a thousand (1,018) Methodists in the city. Brooklyn had but seventy-three; Philadelphia reported more than four teen hundred.[12]

[12] But the Minutes do not show the fact, for the city appointments extended into the adjacent country.

CHAPTER XVI.

METHODISM IN THE NORTH, CONTINUED: CANADA, 1796–1804.

Canada Methodism pertains to New York Conference — Prosperity — Michael Coate — Joseph Jewell — Joseph Sawyer — William Anson — Other Laborers — The Layman Warner — Samuel Draper — Seth Crowell — Great Success — Nathan Bangs — His great Services — His Canadian Life — Sawyer presses him into the Itinerancy — A significant Dream — Looses his Horse — Its Consequences — Fallacy of "Impressions" — Frontier Life — Providential Escape — Calvin Wooster — Bangs's "Double Voice" — Asbury — Sawyer begins Methodism in Montreal — Peter Vannest's Hardships — Thomas Madden — Other Itinerants — Statistical Results — Death of Barbara Heck — The Heck and Embury Families: Note.

CANADIAN Methodism still appertained to the New York Conference. It was considered, in fact, but an extension of that great interior field which we have just been surveying. Preachers of the interior, Draper, Jewell, and others, were laborers beyond the line. William Case, one of the first two presiding elders of the Genesee Conference, became a representative man of the Provincial Church, and for some time the Upper Province was an important portion of the territory of that Conference.

We have traced its progress down to the close of 1796, and witnessed the labors and sufferings of Losee, Dunham, Coleman, Woolsey, Keeler, and Coate. In 1797 the Minutes record no additional laborers, nor indeed anything respecting its appointments. The historians of the Church assure us that great revivals prevailed among the settlements, chiefly through the

instrumentality of Wooster, whose mighty ministry seemed to inflame its whole people.[1]

In 1798 the itinerant band consisted of Dunham, Coate, Coleman, and Michael Coate. The latter was the brother of Samuel Coate, but a very different character. An early Quaker training had given him prudence and stability; "he possessed," say his brethren in their Conference obituary,[2] "a strong mind and sound judgment; was much devoted to God, serious, weighty, and solemn in all his carriage." He began his ministry in 1795, and continued it with blameless fidelity till his death in 1814. He occupied prominent appointments in Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and was often presiding elder of extensive districts. "He was a man of great talents," said one of the best judges, "a solid, amiable, fine-looking man.[3]"

In 1799 the Minutes still show three circuits, but eight hundred and sixty-six members. Michael Coate returns to the States; but Joseph Jewell enters the province, and takes charge of it as presiding elder. He was a good man, says one of our Canadian authorities,[4] cheerful, fond of singing, and had the finest voice, it was said, that had ever been heard in the province. He went to Canada from Maryland, and braved its wintry storms for four years. By the next Conference nearly a thousand members (936) are enrolled in the province. Samuel Coate and Coleman retire from the field, the latter after six years' toil in it; but he goes to encounter similar labors in Vermont. Dunham also disappears from the appointments, but settles, as we have seen, in the country, to become a useful local preacher. Four new laborers appear now on the roll:

[1] Bangs and Playter.
[2] Minutes, 1815.
[3] Letter of Bishop Hedding to the author.
[4] Playter, p. 59.

Joseph Sawyer, William Anson, James Herron, and Daniel Pickett. Sawyer began to travel, in the New York Conference, in 1797; he afterward itinerated in Massachusetts and Vermont, and, for a number of most useful years, devoted himself to this frontier work. He had led Washburn and Laban Clark into the Church, and was to find in the wilderness of Upper Canada Nathan Bangs, and send him forth on his long and memorable career of hardly rivaled services to American Methodism. Thirteen years he was a member of the Conference, four of them as a circuit preacher, four as presiding elder, in Canada, the other five in the United States. He was a holy man, full of energy, of a vigorous mind, and great success. When he married he was compelled to locate, and settled in Matilda, on the St. Lawrence, where he continued to preach with great acceptance. Late in life he returned to the United States, and died at Mamaroneck, near New York city, endeared to all who knew him by the purity of his life, and the religious geniality of his temper.

William Anson we have already met, planting Methodism on Grand Isle, Lake Champlain. He remained a member of the Conference till his death at Malta, N. Y., in 1848. Though a preacher for nearly half a century, a founder of the Church in Canada and Vermont, a circuit evangelist and presiding elder in some of the hardest fields of early Methodism, scarcely any information of his services has been recorded, and we are entirely ignorant of his parentage, early life, conversion, and even the place and date of his birth.[5] His brief obituary in the Minutes says "he never flinched from duty," was a "pioneer of the gospel in many places," of "sterling integrity and respectable talents."

[5] Memorials of Methodism in the Eastern States, ii, p. 193.

We know still less of Pickett and Herron, the two young recruits who came with him to the province. The Grand River Circuit was now added to the appointments, and traveled by Pickett; it took in the Ottawa country, where, it is said, the young itinerant, for many years, was affectionately remembered.

In the next year Sawyer procured the erection of the first Methodist church in the Niagara country, where the faithful layman, Christian Warner, had long represented Methodism, and entertained its preachers. The building was located near St. David's, in Warner's neighborhood; it bore his worthy name, and was the third built in the province. There were now (1801) 1,159 Methodists in the country, and five circuits, supplied by ten preachers. Samuel Draper had come from the interior of New York, a man of excessive humor, but "in many places quite successful." "Hundreds," add the Minutes, "will have cause to rejoice that they ever heard his voice."[6] He died in Amenia, N. Y., 1824, in the forty-sixth year of his age and twenty-third of his ministry. Seth Crowell had come from New England; he was now about twenty years old, but of heroic character. Bangs says: "He was a young preacher of great zeal, and of the most indefatigable industry; and going into that country he soon caught the divine fire which had been enkindled by the instrumentality of Wooster, Coate, and Dunham. It had, indeed, extended into the lower province, on the Ottawa River, an English settlement about fifty miles west of Montreal." He possessed superior talents, "and," say his brethren, "was often heard to speak in demonstration of the Spirit and with power, and was instrumental in the conversion of many souls."[7]

[6] Minutes, 1825. [7] Minutes, 1827.

He subsequently labored, with extraordinary success, in New England and New York. Bangs, who was now a spectator of the labors of these brave men, says that this year "a glorious revival in Upper Canada extended up the shore of Lake Ontario, even to the head of the lake, and to Niagara, and thence to Long Point, on the northwestern shore of Lake Erie, including four large four-weeks' circuits. The district was under the charge of Joseph Jewell, who traveled extensively through the newly-settled country, preaching in log-houses, in barns, and sometimes in groves, and everywhere beholding the displays of the power and grace of God in the awakening and conversion of sinners, as well as the sanctification of believers. A great work of God was carried on this year, under the preaching of Joseph Sawyer, whose faithful labors on the Niagara Circuit will be long and gratefully remembered by the people in that country; and it was during this revival that the present writer, after four or five years of hard struggling under a consciousness of his sinfulness, was brought into the fold of Christ. And here he wishes to record his gratitude to God for his distinguished grace in snatching such a brand from the fire, and to his people for their kindness, and more especially to that servant of God, Joseph Sawyer, under whose pastoral oversight he was brought into the Church. Nor should the labors and privations, the prayers and sufferings in the cause of Christ, of that faithful servant of God, James Coleman, be forgotten. He preceded Sawyer in the Niagara Circuit, and was beloved by the people of God for his fidelity in the work of the ministry, and for his deep devotion to their spiritual interests, evinced by his faithful attention to the arduous duties of his circuit. He had many seals to his ministry, and the writer of

this remembers with gratitude the many prayers which James Coleman offered up to God in his behalf while a youthful stranger in that land, and while seeking, with his eyes but half opened, to find the way of peace. The work also prevailed on the Bay of Quinte and Oswegatchie Circuits, under the labors of Sylvanus Keeler, Seth Crowell, and others. Like the new settlements in the Western country, Upper Canada was at that time but sparsely populated, so that in riding from one appointment to another the preachers sometimes had to pass through wildernesses from ten to sixty miles, and not unfrequently had either to encamp in the woods or sleep in Indian huts. And sometimes, in visiting the newly settled places, they have carried provender for their horses over night, when they would tie them to a tree to prevent their straying in the woods, while the preachers themselves had to preach, eat, and lodge in the same room, the curling smoke ascending through an opening in the roof of the log-house, which had not yet the convenience of even a chimney. For the self-denying labors and sacrifices of these early Methodist preachers, thousands of immortal beings in Canada will doubtless praise God in that day 'when he shall come to make up his jewels.'"[8] As a consequence of this revival the returns of 1802 show more than fifteen hundred members, a gain of nearly three hundred and fifty in one year.

The important name of Nathan Bangs is now recorded on the roll of appointments. I have elsewhere given the details of his most interesting life,[9] and have shown that he was not only a public but a representative man in the Methodist Episcopal Church for more than half a century; that during nearly sixty years he appeared

[8] Life and Times of Bangs, p. 77. New York, 1863. [9] Ibid.

almost constantly in its pulpits; that he was the founder of its periodical literature, and of its "Conference course" of ministerial study, and one of the founders of its present system of educational institutions; the first missionary secretary appointed by its General Conference, the first clerical editor of its General Conference newspaper press, the first editor of its Quarterly Review, and, for many years, the chief editor of its monthly Magazine and its book publications; that he may be pronounced the principal founder of the American literature of Methodism, a literature now remarkable for its extent, and of no inconsiderable intrinsic value; that besides his innumerable miscellaneous writings for its periodicals, he wrote more volumes in defense or illustration of his denomination than any other man, and became its recognized historian; that he was one of the founders of its Missionary Society, wrote the Constitution and first Circular Appeal of that great cause, and through sixteen years, prior to the organization of its secretaryship as a salaried function, he labored indefatigably and gratuitously for the society as its vice-president, secretary, or treasurer, and during more than twenty years wrote all its annual reports; that after his appointment as its resident secretary he devoted to it his entire energies, conducting its correspondence, seeking missionaries for it, planning its mission fields, pleading for it in the Churches, and representing it in the Conferences; and that he was, withal, a man of profound piety, of universal charity, and much and admirable individuality. Few men, if any, have longer or more successfully labored to promote those great interests of the denomination which have given it consolidation and permanence. If greater men have, especially in his latter years of compara-

tive retirement, more actively represented it, no one, in our day, has embodied in himself more of its history, no one has linked so much of its past with its present, and hereafter his name must recur often in our pages.

Born in Connecticut in 1778, he had emigrated in his thirteenth year, with his family, to Stamford, N. Y., and had wandered thence, in his twenty-first year, as a school teacher and surveyor, to the Niagara region of Upper Canada. He found a friend in Christian Warner, near St. Davids, and was brought under Methodist influence. He had despised and ridiculed the new Church in former times; but, for years, he had been struggling with a restless conscience. James Coleman's ardent exhortations had deeply affected him. Joseph Sawyer met him at Warner's, where he heard the itinerant preach. "He unfolded," says Bangs, "all the enigmas of my heart more fully than I could myself. I was powerfully affected, and wept much." He was soon after converted. "I resolved," he adds, "to devote myself to God, come what might." He began to open his school with prayer. The good innovation raised a storm of persecution against him, and he was driven away. This trial was a great blessing; it committed him publicly to religion, and opened the way for his entrance upon the career of his life as a preacher of the gospel. "I had now," he continues, "taken a stand from which I could not well recede. I felt much inward peace, and the Holy Scriptures were indescribably precious to me." He conformed himself to the severest customs of the Methodists. He had prided himself on his fine personal appearance, and had dressed in the full fashion of the times, with ruffled shirt, and long hair in a cue. He now ordered his laundress to take off his ruffles; his

long hair shared the same fate, not, however, without the remonstrances of his pious sister, who deemed this rigor unnecessary, and admired his young but manly form with a sister's pride. He was received into the society of the Methodists. He had considered them unworthy of his regard, he now considered himself unworthy of theirs, and took his place among them with deep humility. "Soon after this," he continues, "I boarded with Christian Warner, my class-leader, a man of sweet spirit, and for whom I shall ever entertain an ardent affection. He was a pattern of religion, always consistent in his conduct, and acted the part of a parent toward me. Such was my diffidence that I gave up my judgment almost entirely to others whom I esteemed on account of their experience and piety. I found Christian Warner worthy of my utmost confidence, and he became my counselor and guide in this critical period of my Christian life."

Warner led him into the knowledge of "the deep things of God," especially the Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification, which became a favorite and lifelong theme in his ministrations and conversations.

Sawyer returned again and again to the settlement, and always with the urgent exhortation that he should go forth and preach. He made several trials in neighboring hamlets, sometimes with success, sometimes with failure. In the month of August, 1801, about one year after he had joined the Church, and three months after he had been licensed as an exhorter, he received license to preach, and immediately departed for a circuit. Having earned some money as a surveyor, in addition to his salary as teacher, he was able to purchase an outfit of clothing, and a horse and its furniture, not forgetting the indispensable saddle-bags of the itin

erant. "I sold," he says, "my surveyor's instruments to a friend whom I had taught the art, mounted my horse, and rode forth to 'sound the alarm' in the wilderness, taking no further thought 'what I should eat, or drink, or wherewithal I should be clothed.'" He had now learned to trust the divine guidance unfalteringly, for God "had found him in a desert land, and in the waste, howling wilderness; he had led him about, had instructed him, had kept him as the apple of his eye."

He thus began his itinerancy, "under the presiding elder," Joseph Sawyer, and as colleague of Anson, on Niagara Circuit, which required six weeks' travel around it, with daily preaching. Before the end of the year he had so extended his circuit that a new one was formed of that part of it called Long Point, which juts into Lake Erie. This beginning of success lifted a weight from his diffident spirit. Before it occurred he had given way to despair, under a "temptation of the devil," as he believed. Seeing no immediate effect of his labors, he had begun to doubt his call to the ministry, and had resolved to return home and give up his "license." He had actually mounted his horse, and was retracing his course, when, arriving at the Grand River, he found that a "January thaw" had so broken up the ice as to render it impossible for him to cross, whether by a boat or on the ice itself. Thus providentially arrested, he returned despondent and confounded. A significant dream relieved him. He thought he was working with a pickax on the top of a basaltic rock. His muscular arm brought down stroke after stroke for hours; but the rock was hardly indented. He said to himself at last, "It is useless; I will pick no more." Suddenly a stranger of dignified mien stood by his side

and spoke to him. "You will pick no more?" "No more." "Were you not set to this task?" "Yes." "And why abandon it?" "My work is vain; I make no impression on the rock." Solemnly the stranger replied, "What is that to you? Your duty is to pick, whether the rock yields or not. Your work is in your own hands; the result is not. Work on!" He resumed his task. The first blow was given with almost superhuman force, and the rock flew into a thousand pieces. He awoke, pursued his way back to Burford with fresh zeal and energy, and a great revival followed. From that day he never had even a "temptation" to give up his commission.

"In Oxford," he continues, "Major Ingersoll, to whom I was first introduced, was a Universalist, and he told me, on my first visit, that he was an unbeliever in the doctrine of depravity; that he never had himself a depraved heart. 'This assertion,' said I, 'is a sure sign that you never knew your heart.' On my second visit I found him sitting in his chair, with his head inclined on his hands. He looked up to me, and said, 'O what a depraved heart I have!' 'Ay!' said I; 'have you discovered that fact at last?' 'Yes, indeed,' he replied; 'what shall I do to be saved?' 'Surrender it up to God by faith in Christ, and he will give you a new heart, and renew a right spirit within you.' He did so, and found the promise verified. He, his wife, who was a very sensible and amiable woman, his two daughters, together with the husband of one of them, were soon converted and joined the Church, and the good work quickly spread through the neighborhood, sweeping all before it. In this way the revival prevailed in both of these places, so that large and flourishing societies were established, and no less than six

preachers were raised up, one of whom, by the name of Reynolds, became a bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church of Canada. Thus the rock was split. The reformation extended through many settlements, particularly Oxford, where large numbers were 'turned from darkness to light.'"

He made an excursion from his circuit to visit his old friends on the Bay of Quinte Circuit, but, when not far from Toronto, (Little York, as it was then called,) his horse died on the road. "Here, then," he says, "I was alone in a strange place, without money, without a horse, and, as far as I knew, without friends. I trusted in God alone, and he provided for me. In about half an hour, during which I hardly knew which way to turn, a gentleman came along and offered to lend me a horse on condition that I would defer my journey to the Bay of Quinte, and agree to remain in those parts preaching for some time. I thankfully accepted his offer, mounted the horse, and went on my way rejoicing up to Little York. The settlements in this part of the country were all new, the roads extremely bad, and the people generally poor and demoralized. Our occasional preachers were exposed to many privations, and often to much suffering from poor fare and violent opposition. Seth Crowell, a zealous and godly itinerant, had traveled along the lake shore before me, and had been instrumental in the awakening and conversion of many of the settlers, so that some small societies had been formed; but they were far apart, and I found them in a dwindled condition. On Yonge-street, which was a settlement extending westward from Little York in a direct line for about thirty miles, there were no societies, but all the field was new and uncultivated, with the exception of some Quaker neighborhoods."

He set out to travel among these settlements on a winter's day, with the determination to call at as many houses as possible on the way, and give a "word of exhortation" to each. At every door he said: "I have come to talk with you about religion, and to pray with you. If you are willing to receive me for this purpose I will stop; if not, I will go on." "Only one," he says, "repulsed me through the entire day; all others heard my exhortations, and permitted me to pray with them."

He learned at least one valuable lesson on this journey. He had given too much importance to "impressions." "At a certain time," says his friend and successor in Canada, Dr. Fitch Reed, "when the weather was very cold, and the newly-fallen snow quite deep, his mind became more than usually impressed with the value of souls, and his heart burned with desire to do all he could to save them. In the midst of his reflections he came opposite a dwelling that stood quite a distance from the road, in the field. Instantly he was impressed to go to the house and talk and pray with its family. He could see no path through the deep snow, and he felt reluctant to wade that distance, expose himself to the cold, and perhaps after all accomplish no good. He resolved not to go. No sooner had he passed the house than the impression became doubly strong, and he was constrained to turn back. He fastened his horse to the fence, waded through the snow to the house, and not a soul was there. From that time he resolved never to confide in mere impressions."

He delayed much on this route, preaching often, and with success. "There was quite an awakening among the people," he writes, "and many sought redemption in the blood of Christ, so that several societies were formed. But there was a marked line of distinction

between the righteous and the wicked, there being but very few who were indifferent or outwardly moral to interpose between them. All showed openly what they were by their words and actions, and either accepted religion heartily or opposed it violently; the great majority, though most of them would come to hear me preach, were determined opposers." Such is the character of frontier communities. Moral restraints are feeble among them; conventional restraints are few; the freedom of their simple wilderness-life characterizes all their habits; they have their own code of decorum, and sometimes of law itself. They are frank, hospitable, but violent in prejudice and passion; fond of disputation, of excitement, and of hearty, if not reckless, amusements. The primitive Methodist preachers knew well how to accommodate themselves to the habits, as also to the fare of such a people, and hence their extraordinary success along the whole American frontier. Their familiar methods of worship in cabins and barns, or under trees, suited the rude settlers. Their meetings were without the stiff order and ceremonious formality of older communities. They were often scenes of free debate, of interpellations and interlocutions; a hearer at the door post or the window responding to, or questioning, or defying the preacher, who "held forth" from a chair, a bench, or a barrel, at the other end of the building. This popular freedom was not without its advantages; it authorized equal freedom on the part of the preacher; it allowed great plainness of speech and directness of appeal. Bangs's memoranda before me afford not a few examples of this primitive life of the frontier—crowded congregations in log-huts or barns, some of the hearers seated, some standing, some filling the unglazed casements, some thronging the overhang-

ing trees; startling interjections thrown into the sermon by eccentric listeners, violent polemics between the preacher and headstrong sectarists, the whole assembly sometimes involved in the earnest debate, some for, some against him, and ending in general confusion. A lively Methodist hymn was usually the best means of restoring order in such cases. Our itinerant was never confounded by these interruptions. He had a natural tact and a certain authoritative presence, an air of command, qualified by a concessive temper, which seldom failed to control the roughest spirits. He was often characteristic, if not directly personal, in his preaching, and sometimes had dangerous encounters.

"I had," he says, "an appointment to preach in a small cabin, the family of which was too poor to entertain me conveniently over night. I therefore intended to return, as had been my custom, about six miles, after the sermon, for lodgings. I was overtaken on my way to the place by a sleigh, with three men in it. I turned my horse out of the road and let them pass me; but they no sooner did so than they stopped and began vociferating blasphemies and blackguard language at me, and if I attempted to pass them, they would drive on, obstruct the way, and thus prevent my going forward. In this manner they continued to annoy me about half an hour, keeping up an unceasing stream of Billingsgate. I made them no reply. They at length drove on, and left me to pursue my way in peace. In the evening, as I rose up to preach, these three men stood looking in at the door, and as I was standing at the door-post, they closed the entrance, and were close to my right hand. I requested them to take seats; two of them did so, but the other kept his place. I gave out for my text Dan. v, 27: 'Thou art weighed in

the balances, and art found wanting.' In the introduction to the discourse I made some remarks about Belshazzar's impious feast. I enlarged on the prevalent drinking habits of the settlers, and observed that there were people who were not contented to drink in taverns and in their own houses, but carried bottles of rum in their pockets. The man who still stood at my right hand had a bottle in his pocket; he drew it forth, shook it in my face with an oath, exclaiming, 'You are driving that at me,' and kept up a continual threat. The owner of the house, who was a warm friend of mine, instantly arose, with two or three others, all trembling with indignation, and came toward the offender to seize him and thrust him away. Perceiving their design, I feared there would be bloodshed, and requested them to desist and take their seats, for I was not afraid of my opposer. They sat down, but this only seemed to enrage the man still more. He kept on swearing, with his clenched fist directed at me; but I continued my discourse unmoved by his threats, until I finally called on the God of Daniel, who delivered him from the lions, to deliver me from this lionlike sinner, when suddenly he escaped out of the door and fled; his two companions followed him, and we ended the meeting in peace. My friends, fearing I might meet with some peril should I attempt to return that night, as it was supposed that these ruffians knew that I intended to do so, persuaded me to stay all night. It was well I did so, for these men lay in ambush for me, and seeing a traveler approach on horseback, one of them said, with an oath, 'There he is, let's have him,' and off they went pursuing him, blaspheming and cursing him as the Methodist preacher. They caught him, and were preparing to wreak their vengeance upon him, but soon discovered that they had

committed an egregious and dangerous blunder. The assailed traveler, seeing his peril, turned upon them boldly, and, showing a hearty disposition to fight, notwithstanding the odds against him, and using a style of language surprisingly like their own, they became convinced that he could be no Methodist preacher, and took to their heels. Thus God saved me from these ravening wolves. I blessed his name, and learned to trust more than ever his protecting providence. No little good resulted from this incident. It raised me up many friends; opposers even became ashamed of the malicious rowdies, and were ready now to defend me. In the midst of all these strange scenes I enjoyed great peace with God, I had constant access to him in prayer, and went on my route rejoicing that I was counted worthy to suffer for his name's sake. I passed on from settlement to settlement, preaching and praying with the people. The Divine Spirit was poured out upon them, and many were converted. Some of the neighborhoods were extremely poor; in some the people had not yet a single stable for the accommodation of my horse. I carried with me oats for him, and, tying him to a tree, left him to eat at night, and ate and slept myself in the same room in which I preached. This I had to do frequently; but God was with me, blessing my own soul and the people."

Such are some of the "lights and shadows" of frontier life, and of the frontier itinerant ministry of Methodism at the beginning of our century. The inhabitants of this now rich and flourishing region, with a commodious Methodist chapel in almost every city, town, and village, can hardly deem them credible, for the frontier, the "far West," has since passed to the Mississippi River, and even beyond it.

He left the circuit in general prosperity. One year before it reported three hundred and twenty members; it now reported six hundred and twenty, and Long Point, the chief field of his labors, was recognized at the Conference of 1802 as a distinct circuit. About a hundred souls had been converted in Burford and Oxford through his instrumentality, and in our day his name is still a household word in the Methodist families of that region. Few who knew him remain; yet the descendants of his old hearers, living no longer in log-cabins, but in comfortable, if not opulent, homes, worshiping no longer under trees, or in barns, but in convenient temples, have learned from their pious and departed fathers to revere him as the pioneer champion of the cross among their early settlements.

At the New York Conference, in June, 1802, he was received on probation, though not present, and was appointed, with Sawyer and Vannest, to the Bay of Quinte Circuit. It was a vast field of labor. "Among others," he says, "Hezekiah Calvin Wooster had sounded the alarm through these forests, and many were the anecdotes that I heard of him among the people, who delighted to talk of him. He was indefatigable in his labors, 'full of faith and of the Holy Ghost,' and preached with the 'demonstration of the Spirit and of power.' He professed and enjoyed the blessing of sanctification, and was, therefore, a man of mighty faith and prayer. The people never tired of telling of the power of his word, how that sinners could not stand before him, but would either rush out of the house or fall smitten to the floor. I never found so many persons, in proportion to their number, who professed and exemplified the 'perfect love' of God, as he had left on this circuit."

He was near perishing here by an attack of typhus

fever, which prostrated him for seven weeks. The cough and expectoration of blood, which followed the fever, so affected his lungs, that his first attempts to ride were attended with acute pains; but he persisted, and horseback riding was probably itself the remedy that saved him at last. The feebleness of his voice, however, occasioned an unnatural effort to speak loud enough to be heard, and to this fact he ascribed "that double sort of voice" which continued through his long life. Many of his hearers have noticed it as a singularity, and perhaps condemned it as a faulty mannerism, little supposing that, like the scarred and mutilated confessors at the Council of Nice, he thus, in our happier times, and before our opulent Churches, "bore in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus," a memento of the heroic days of our ministry. This deep, tremulous undertone, though usually not agreeable, took at times a peculiar pathos. How much more affecting would it have been had his hearers, in his latter years, known that it was caused by his attempts to preach the everlasting gospel through the frontier wilderness when he was apparently a dying man.

He went to the next Conference, and was welcomed by Asbury, who "filled him with admiration." "I was impressed," he says, "with an awful solemnity, as the bishop's hands were laid on my head, and he lifted up his strong and sonorous voice, saying, 'From the ends of the earth we call upon thee, O Lord God, to pour upon this thy servant the Holy Ghost, for the office and work of a deacon in the Church of God.' These were the words he used instead of the prescribed form, and, as he uttered them, such a sense of the divine presence overwhelmed me that my knees trembled, and I feared that I should fall to the floor!" At the close of the

session he mounted his horse and set off for the far west, a region still unpenetrated by the Methodist itinerants. Thither we shall hereafter follow him.

Meanwhile Joseph Sawyer extended his travels, in 1802, to Montreal, where he found a few Methodists from the states, and formed a society of seven members, the germ of the subsequent growth of the Church there. Other laborers had reached the provinces. Peter Vannest arrived in 1802, and left at the close of our present period, but during these two years did effective service, and had his full share of frontier sufferings. "He was obliged," says our Canadian authority, "to cross the Mississquoi River when winter came, but the horse-boat was sunk, and he crossed in a canoe amid the drift ice. He was obliged to pursue his work, on the Lower Canada side of the river, on foot. He thus traveled a hundred miles, most of the way through the woods and deep snow, without a track, sometimes stepping into spring holes up to his knees in mud and water. Some of his appointments required him to travel on the Mississquoi Bay, covered with ice, and two or three inches of water on the top, wearing shoes, having no boots. When on the Bay of Quinte Circuit, one of the journeys was thirty-four miles through woods. He, and probably other preachers, used to carry oats in his saddle-bags to feed his horse."[10] On the Oswegatchie Circuit some of the appointments had twenty miles of woods between them. He was noted for zeal in enforcing plainness of dress on the members. From Canada he went to labor in New Jersey.

Thomas Madden, though born in the state of New York, began his ministry of thirty-one years in 1802 in Canada, a youth of twenty-two years. He died there

[10] Playter, p. 79.

"in Christian triumph," say the Canadian Minutes,[11] in 1834. He was a diligent laborer, traveling a circuit of nearly three hundred and fifty miles, and preaching thirty sermons a month. He was one of the ablest ministers of the Canadian Church, says one of his successors;[12] precise, methodical, instructive, energetic, "admired for the promptitude and firmness of his proceedings." He sleeps, with the Hecks, and other memorable Methodists, in the old graveyard in front of Augusta. In 1804 an historic and worthy compeer of Bangs appeared in the province, Martin Ruter, a youth of nineteen years, destined to great eminence in the denomination, and to a missionary's grave in Texas. We shall hereafter have occasion to notice him more fully. He now took charge of the infant society in Montreal, where Merwin had labored the preceding year, and whence he had attempted to bear the standard into Quebec. Besides these evangelists, Samuel Howe, Rueben Harris, and Luther Bishop served more or less time in the hard field.

In 1803 we find appointments in Lower Canada, besides Montreal; but they are obscurely placed, in the Minutes, among the circuits of a New England (Pittsfield) District. They are St. John's and Saville, with Elijah Chichester and Laban Clark as preachers, and Ottawa, under Daniel Pickett; Clark and Chichester were in the province but a year, and, like Ruter, belong more properly to our narrative elsewhere.

At the close of the period there were one district, seven circuits, ten preachers, and nearly eighteen hundred (1787) members in the provincial Church. It had

[11] Canada Minutes, 1834. Bangs (Alphabetic List) is erroneous in both the dates of the beginning and end of his ministry.

[12] Carroll's Past and Present, p. 83.

secured a permanent lodgment in both Canadas, though it could yet claim but little more than a hundred communicants in the lower province. Since our last notice of it, (in 1796,) it had advanced from seven hundred and ninety-five to one thousand seven hundred and eighty-seven members, gaining nearly a thousand, while its ministry had more than doubled. The period closed with the death of Barbara Heck, whose humble name will become increasingly illustrious with the lapse of ages, as associated with the founding of American Methodism in both the United States and British North America. She survived her husband, Paul Heck, whose death has been noticed, about twelve years, and died at the residence of her son, Samuel Heck, in "front of Augusta," in 1804, aged seventy years. Her death was befitting her life. Her old German Bible, the guide of her youth in Ireland, her resource during the falling away of her people in New York, her inseparable companion in all her wanderings in the wildernesses of Northern New York and Canada, was her oracle and comfort to the last. She was found sitting in her chair dead, with the well-used and endeared volume open on her lap. And thus passed away this devoted and unpretentious woman, who so faithfully, yet unconsciously, laid the foundations of one of the grandest ecclesiastical structures of modern ages, and whose memory will last as "long as the sun and moon endure."

The few Methodists of Canada who in 1804 bore Barbara Heck to her grave in the old Blue Churchyard, Augusta, might well have exclaimed, "What hath God wrought!" The cause which she had been instrumental in founding had already spread out from New York city over the whole of the United States, and over much of both Canadas. It comprised seven Annual Confer

ences, four hundred traveling preachers, and more than one hundred and four thousand members. But if we estimate its results in our day, we shall see that it has pleased God to encircle the name of this lowly woman with a halo of surpassing honor, for American Methodism has far transcended all other divisions of the Methodistic movement, and may yet make her name an endeared household word throughout the world.[13]

[13] "Women of Methodism," p. 198, (New York, 1866,) where will be found fuller particulars of Mrs. Heck and her family. The Embury and Heck families, so singularly joined together in Methodist history, have blended in several neighborhoods, and the descendants of both families are now widely scattered in the Churches of Upper and Lower Canada. "Mrs. Hick, wife of the late Rev. John Hick, Wesleyan minister, Mrs. M'Kenzie, Mrs. John Torrance, and Mrs. Lunn, all grandchildren of Philip Embury, died happy in God. They have left numerous descendants in Montreal and through Canada, highly respected. Philip Embury's great-great-grandson, John Torrance, Jr., Esq., now fills the honorable and responsible position of treasurer and trustee steward of three of our large Wesleyan Churches in Montreal." (Christ. Ad., Jan. 11, 1866.) Paul and Barbara Heck had five children, namely, "Elizabeth, born in New York in 1766; John, born in the same place in 1767; Jacob, born there, 1769; Samuel, in Camden, N. Y., July 28, 1771; and Nancy, at the same place, 1772. They are all now dead. Elizabeth and Nancy died in Montreal, Samuel and Jacob in Augusta, and John, unmarried, in Georgia, U. S., as early as 1805. Jacob married a Miss Shorts, who, with himself, rests in the country graveyard of the Old Blue Church, Augusta, where rest also Paul and Barbara Heck. Samuel married a Miss Wright; both interred there. But three of Jacob's children survive; six of Samuel's are still living. His son Samuel was a probationer in the Wesleyan ministry when he was called to his reward; his precious dust also lies in this graveyard. He was eminently pious, a clear-headed theologian, and a methodical preacher. The elder Samuel was an eminent local minister for more than forty years. The ten surviving grandchildren of Paul and Barbara Heck are pious, and many of their great-grandchildren also. For the reasons we have assigned, this graveyard will be dear to every heart with which Methodism and the cause of God are identical. Here lie the remains of the once beautiful Catharine Sweitzer, married at the early age of sixteen to Philip Embury on the eve of his embarkation for America; also those of the much respected John Lawrence, who left Ireland in company with the Emburys, and who married Mrs. Embury"—Christian Guardian, Canada.

CHAPTER XVII.

METHODISM IN THE EASTERN STATES: 1796-1804.

New England Methodism — Robert Yellalee — Escape from an Assassin — John Brodhead's Services and Character — Timothy Merritt's Character and Labors — Lee in the East.

We have traced the progress of Methodism, in the Eastern States, down to the Thompson (Conn.) Conference, held in September, 1796, with considerable detail; for, fortunately, the early records of the New England Church are more ample than those of any other portion of the denomination.

Important laborers were now added to the small band of itinerants. Robert Yellalee commenced his ministry in England when twenty-two years old, and had there a good training in the toils and trials of his brethren. While on his way to an appointment, he was informed of an intended attempt upon his life. Nothing daunted, trusting in God, he went forward and commenced the meeting. After the introductory services he selected for a text, "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker," Isaiah xlv, 9. He beheld before him a man whose countenance betrayed contending passions, but the sermon proceeded; "the power of the Most High descended;" a long knife dropped from the sleeve of the man to the floor, and at the close of the discourse he came forward trembling and weeping, "confessed the intention of his heart, and begged for the prayers of his proposed victim."

In 1796 Yellalee was ordained elder by Bishop Coke

for the Foulah Mission, Africa. In company with others he embarked for Sierra Leone. War some time afterward broke out, and, together with other circumstances, rendered it necessary for the missionaries to leave.[1] He sailed for America, joined the Methodist itinerants of New England in 1796, and was appointed to Provincetown, Mass. In 1797 he was colleague of Joshua Taylor, on Readfield Circuit, Maine, and the next year, of Aaron Humphrey, on Bath and Union Circuits, in the same state. In 1797 his domestic circumstances compelled him to locate. He resided, till his death, in Maine, usefully employed as a local preacher. He founded the society at Saco, and planted the germs of many others while traveling in that state. It was his happiness to receive into the Church the senior bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Joshua Soule.[2] He died July 12, 1846, in the seventy-eighth year of his age. He was a man of ordinary talents, but of an excellent heart, and his death was attended with the peace and victory of faith. "The Sun of righteousness, which had been," says one who attended him, "his light for above sixty years, shone with higher brightness in the hour when he was called to enter the vale of death."[3]

John Brodhead's name, which we have incidentally met already, is endeared to New England Methodists. He was born in Smithfield, Northampton County, Penn., October 5, 1770. Like most of the distinguished evangelists noticed in these pages, he was blessed with the lessons and examples of a pious mother, and was the subject of deep religious convictions when but a child. "He has been heard to say that he never forgot the impressions made upon his mind, while

[1] Zion's Herald, July 16, 1845. [2] Ibid., Aug. 19, 1846. [3] Bishop Soule

kneeling at his mother's feet, learning his little prayers."[4] This early seriousness disappeared amid the gayety and temptations of youth, but about his twenty-second or twenty-third year he became a regenerated man. He entered the itinerant service in 1794, a year in which Beauchamp, Snethen, Canfield, Joseph Mitchell, and other New England evangelists, commenced their travels. His first circuit was that of Northumberland, Penn. In 1795 he was appointed to Kent, Del. The next year he came to New England, and took the distant appointment of Readfield, Me., then one of the only three circuits in that province. In 1797 he passed to Massachusetts, and was appointed to Lynn and Marblehead; the following year he was removed to Rhode Island, and labored on Warren Circuit. In 1799 he returned to Maine, and resumed his labors on Readfield Circuit; the next year he passed through a long transference to Connecticut, and took charge for two years of the New London District, where he superintended the labors of Ruter, Branch, Vannest, Sabin, Ostrander, and other "mighty men." In 1802 he traveled the Vershire District, chiefly in Vermont. The next year he was appointed to Hanover, N. H., and the three following years had charge of the New Hampshire District. He returned to Massachusetts in 1807, and traveled during two years the Boston District, with a host of able men under him, among whom were Pickering, Webb, Munger, Steele, Kibby, Merwin, Ruter, etc. The next four years he was appointed, respectively, to Portsmouth and Newmarket, (two years at each,) after which he was four years on the superannuated list, but took an appointment again, in 1820, at Newmarket and Kingston, as colleague of Joseph A. Merrill. He was

[4] Letter from Rev. S. Norris to the author.

now advanced in years and afflicted with infirmities, and his subsequent appointments show much irregularity. He was again in the superannuated ranks in 1821, but took an appointment the next two years as colleague of Phineas Crandall at Newmarket; the ensuing three years he was on the supernumerary list, but labored as he was able at Newmarket and Epping, N. H. In 1827 he took an effective relation to the Conference, and labored two years, respectively, at Newmarket and Poplin, N. H.; the following two years he was left without an appointment at his own request. In 1831 he was again placed on the supernumerary list, and continued there till 1833, when he resumed effective service, and was appointed to Salisbury and Exeter, N. H. The next year we find him among the supernumeraries, where he continued until 1837, when he once more entered the itinerant ranks, and, as was befitting a veteran so distinguished, died in them after a year's service at Seabrook and Hampton Mission, N. H. He spent forty-four years in the ministry, forty-two of them in the East, laboring more or less in all the New England States. He died April 7, 1838, of a disease of the heart, from which he had suffered for a number of years. His departure was peaceful and triumphant. The Boston Post paid the following tribute to his memory at the time: "Possessing naturally a strong mind, warm affections, and an imposing person, he was a popular as well as an able and pious preacher; and probably no man in New England had more personal friends, or could exercise a more widely extended influence. He was repeatedly elected to the Senate of his adopted state and to Congress, yet was always personally averse to taking office; and though he spoke but seldom on political subjects, the soundness of his judgment, and the known

purity of his life, gave much weight to his opinions. In the early days of his ministry he endured almost incredible fatigue and hardship in carrying the glad tidings of the gospel to remote settlements, often swimming rivers on horseback, and preaching in his clothes saturated with water, till he broke down a naturally robust constitution and laid the foundation of disease, which affected him more or less during his after life. In his last days, the gospel, which he had so long and so faithfully preached to others, was the never-failing support of his own mind. To a brother clergyman, who inquired of him, a short time before his death, how he was, he said, 'The old vessel is a wreck, but I trust in God the cargo is safe.'"

He "was a good man," say his ministerial brethren in the Minutes; "deeply pious, ardently and sincerely devoted to the interests of the Church and world; it is known to all who were acquainted with the untarnished excellence of his character, that a great man and a prince has fallen in Israel."[5] This brief but significant remark is all that the public records of the Church have noted respecting the character of one of the most beloved names of its early history. Brodhead was a true Christian gentleman, courteous, unaffectedly dignified, and of a temper so benign that all who approached him loved him, and even little children found in him an endearing reciprocation of their tender sympathies; he was universally a favorite among them. He was always hopeful, confiding in God and in man, forbearing toward the weak, co-working with the strong, instant in prayer, living by faith, entertaining large and apostolical views of the gracious provisions of the gospel and the gracious purposes of Providence. All felt

[5] Minutes of 1838.

in his company that they were in the presence of a large-minded, pure-hearted, and unlimitedly trustworthy man. With such a character he could not but be generally popular; and such was the esteem entertained for him by his fellow-citizens of New Hampshire, that, besides important offices in their State Legislature and Executive Council, and a term of four years, as their representative in the Congress of the United States, his consent alone was necessary to have secured him the supreme office of the state. While in civil positions he retained unabated the fervency of his spiritual zeal; in Washington he maintained, at his lodgings, a weekly prayer-meeting, which was composed of his fellow-legislators; and on Sabbaths he preached, more or less, in all the neighboring Methodist churches.

As a preacher, he possessed more than ordinary talents; his clear understanding, combined with quick sensibilities and a vivid imagination, could not but render him eloquent on the themes of religion. He was partial to the benigner topics of the gospel, and often would his congregations and himself melt into tears under the inspiration of his subjects. When he treated on the divine denunciations of sin, it was with a solemnity, and at times with an awful grandeur, that overwhelmed his hearers. "I heard him," says a fellow-laborer,[6] "when I was a young man, preach on the Last Judgment, in Bromfield-street chapel, on a Sabbath evening, and if the terrible reality had occurred that night its impression could hardly have been more alarming." At such times, "seeing the terror of the Lord," he persuaded men with an irresistible eloquence, his large person and noble countenance seemed to expand

[6] Rev. T. C. Peirce to the author.

with the majesty of his thoughts, and he stood forth before the awe-struck assembly with the authority of an embassador of Christ.

He was six feet in stature, with an erect and firmly-built frame. Though slight in person when young, in his maturer years he became robustly stout, and toward the end of his life somewhat corpulent, but retained to the last the dignified uprightness of his mien. His complexion was light, his features well defined, his forehead high and expanded, his eye dark, large, and glowing with the spontaneous benevolence of his spirit. In fine, his *tout ensemble* rendered him one of the noblest men in person, as he unquestionably was in character.

Timothy Merritt was "a prince and a great man in Israel." He was born in Barkhamstead, Conn., October, 1775, and trained in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord" by devoted parents, who were early members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in that state. About the seventeenth year of his life he experienced the renewing grace of God. Religion entirely imbued his nature, and marked him, from that period to his death, as a consecrated man. One who first led him into the pulpit, and who held with him during life the communion of a most intimate friendship,[7] says: "I became acquainted with him at his father's, in the town of Barkhamstead, in the northwestern part of the state of Connecticut, in the year 1794. I was introduced to him as a pious young man of great hope and promise to the infant Church in that place and vicinity. After attending the usual preaching and other exercises at Barkhamstead, on the forenoon of the Sabbath, he accompanied me about five or six miles to another appointment, and, probably for the first time, took a part in the

[7] Rev. Enoch Mudge's letter to the author.

public exercises of the sanctuary. He had before been in the habit of improving his gifts in private and social meetings. He entered the traveling connection in 1796, and was stationed on New London Circuit, on which I had traveled in 1794. This circuit, at that time, was about three hundred miles in extent. Here he was both acceptable and useful. The next year, 1797, he joined me in my labors on Penobscot Circuit, in the province of Maine. His presence to me was as the coming of Titus to Paul, (2 Cor. vii, 6.) We entered heart and handin to the arduous labors required of us in that new country, where we had to cross rivers by swimming our horses, ford passes, and thread our way into new settlements by marked trees. The Lord gave him favor in the eyes of the people, and his heart was encouraged and his hands strengthened by a good revival, in which much people were added unto the Lord. Here our sympathies and Christian friendship were matured and strengthened as the friendship of David and Jonathan."

The next year, 1798, he was sent to Portland Circuit, where he continued two years. In 1800 and 1801 he was on Bath and Union Circuit; and in 1802 on Bath Station. In 1803 he located, and continued in Maine about ten or eleven years, and then removed to the place of his nativity, where he remained till 1817, when he again entered the itinerancy.

The fourteen years of his location were years of great labor, toil, and hardship. He did not locate to leave the work, but that the infant Churches might be eased of the burden of supporting him and his growing family, and that they might have no excuse for not supporting their regular stationed preachers.

Besides the constant and arduous labors required for his own support, he filled appointments in different towns

constantly on the Sabbath, and delivered occasional week-day lectures; as most of the stationed preachers were unordained, he had to visit the societies to administer the ordinances, and assist in organizing and regulating affairs necessary for the peace and prosperity of the cause. Occasionally he attended quarterly-meetings for the presiding elders, from twenty to a hundred miles from home, taking appointments on his way. He went to them in canoes, and skated to them in winters, on the streams and rivers, ten, twelve, or fourteen miles.

When he re-entered the traveling connection, in 1817, he was stationed in Boston. He continued in important appointments down to 1831, when he was stationed at Malden, and devoted much of his time to the editorial duties of Zion's Herald. In 1832–1835 he was at New York, as assistant editor of the Christian Advocate and Journal. Thence he returned to the New England Conference, and was stationed at Lynn, South-street, where he continued two years. His health and physical energies failing, he received a superannuated relation to the Conference, which continued till his life closed.

Merritt possessed rare intellectual vigor. His judgment was remarkably clear and discriminating, grasping the subjects of its investigation, in all their compass, and penetrating to their depths. He lacked fancy and imagination, but was thereby, perhaps, the better fitted for his favorite courses of thought—the investigation and discussion of the great doctrinal truths of religion. His predilection for such subjects was not a curious propensity to speculation, but an interest to ascertain and demonstrate the relations of fundamental tenets to experimental and practical piety. This was the distinguishing characteristic of his preaching. Like St. Paul, he delighted to discuss the "mystery of godli-

ness," and illustrate its "greatness." Dangerous error shrunk in his presence. The doctrine of Christian perfection was his favorite theme, and he was a living example of it. "Holiness to the Lord was his constant motto," says his friend, Enoch Mudge; "he was emphatically a man of a single eye, a man of one work. He literally forsook all to follow Christ and seek the salvation of his fellow-men. Both his mental and physical system were formed for the work. He had a muscular energy which was fitted for labor and fatigue. I remember his saying to me one morning, after having performed what to me and others would have been a fatiguing journey, 'I feel as fresh to start, if it were neeedful, on a journey of a thousand miles, as I did when I started on this.' His mind was of a thoughtful and serious turn, and of great activity. He was constantly grasping for new subjects of inquiry and new scenes of usefulness. In prayer he was grave, solemn, and fervent. In public devotions I have sometimes seen him when he appeared as if alone with his God. An undue familiarity of expression never fell from his lips in prayer; he truly sanctified the Lord God in his heart, and honored him with his lips. When his physical energy gave way, his active mind felt the shock and totterings of the earthly tabernacle. This was the time for the more beautiful development of Christian resignation and submission. He wrestled to sustain himself under the repeated shocks of a species of paralysis which weakened his constitution and rendered it unfit for public labor, by clouding and bewildering his mind. But here patience had her perfect work. A calm submission spread a sacred halo over the closing scenes of life. Even here we had a chastened and melancholy pleasure in noticing the superiority of the men

tal and spiritual energies, which occasionally gleamed out over his physical imbecility and prostration. We saw a noble temple in ruins, but the divine Shekinah had not forsaken it." He did extraordinary service for Methodism. His preaching and devout life promoted it; he was continually writing for it, and some of his publications ranked high in its early literature; he was a champion in its antislavery contests; he was active in its efforts for missions and education. No man of his day had more prominence in the Eastern Churches, for either the excellence of his life or the importance of his services. He died at Lynn, Mass., in 1845.

Such were some of the men who gave character to New England Methodism at the opening of the present period; with them were associated a remarkable number of similar characters, such as Pickering, Ostrander, Mudge, Snethen, M'Coombs, Woolsey, with Lee still at their head, and Garrettson and Hutchinson supervising much of their Western territory. After his visit to Virginia, Lee resumed his labors in the East at the beginning of 1797. His district comprised the whole Methodist field in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts, except two western circuits in the latter; Ostrander, Pickering, Brodhead, Mudge, Snethen, and other strong men were under his guidance. One who witnessed their labors thus describes them: "It is now both pleasing and profitable to reflect with what divine power the gospel was acccompanied, and the surprising effects it produced in the hearts of the people, as it was preached by the Methodist ministry at that time. 'It came not in word only, but in power.' The preachers from the South came among us in the fullness of its blessing; in faith and much assurance in the Holy Ghost; fearing

nothing, and doubting nothing. A divine unction attended the word, 'and fire came out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt-offering and the fat: which when the people saw, they shouted and fell on their faces.' They ran in every direction, kindling and spreading the holy flame, which all the united powers of opposition were unable to quench, for it burned with an inextinguishable blaze. Hence reformations became frequent, deep, and powerful, and many ran to and fro, saying, 'These are the servants of the most high God, who show unto us the way of salvation.' Thus the preachers became 'a spectacle to angels and men.' Sometimes persons felt the gospel to be the power of God unto salvation before they left the house, and went home praising God. This work was so powerful that whole towns and villages, in some instances, were arrested by the influences of the gospel. Not only the poor and obscure, but the rich and great in some cases bowed down under the majesty of the gospel. The great work of God, through the instrumentality of the pioneers of Methodism in New England, subjected them to many, very many sufferings and privations. Their labor was great and extensive. They traveled and preached almost every day. But they endured hunger and thirst, cold and heat, persecutions and reproaches, trials and temptations, weariness and want, as good soldiers of the cross of Christ; not counting their ease and pleasure, friends and homes, health and life, dear to themselves, so that they might bring sinners to God and finish their work with joy."[8]

Such were the labors of the strong men whom Lee led in the early battles of New England, himself, meanwhile, excelling them all. He traversed his immense

[8] Rev. Epaphras Kibby, letter to the author.

district with his usual rapidity, proclaiming the word continually, encouraging the preachers in the privations and toils of the remoter circuits, comforting feeble Churches, and inspiriting them to struggle with persecutions and poverty, to erect chapels, and spread themselves out into adjacent neighborhoods.

END OF VOL. III.